Oxfordshire Guardian
Didcot, Wallingford & Thame

Weekly leisure guide for in and around Oxford

Thursday, April 12 - Wednesday, April 18, 2018 oxfordshireguardian.co.uk Free

Railway centre honoured with Queen's Award

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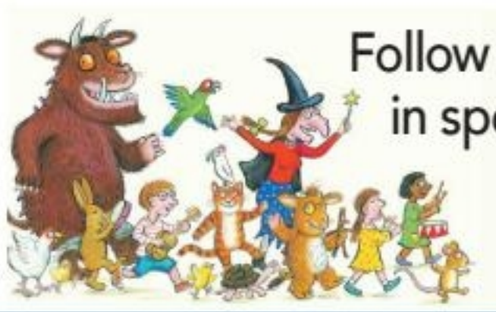

Follow the Gruffalo in special concert

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hairspray

One of 5 pairs of tickets

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Courtney's not-so-secret date with royals at Windsor Castle

By George Welch

"IT is totally crazy – I have never been so shocked."

Only a select few have received an invitation to the most talked about wedding of the year – but one local celebrity will join the glittering guest list on Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's big day.

Didcot's not-so-secret Santa Courtney Hughes will be one of 1,200 people singled out for their contribution to their communities to be invited to St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle on May 19.

The 20-year-old, who has collected more than £100,000 worth of Christmas presents in seven years, has struggled to contain her excitement since revealing her invitation to the celebration last week.

Courtney has been singled out for her achievements by Prime Minister Theresa May and last year received an esteemed British Citizen Award at Westminster – but this tops the lot.

The Didcot Community Hospital nursing assistant set up charity Secret Santa in 2012 to collect gifts for sick and vulnerable people at Christmas in memory of her nan who was a great supporter of the royal family.

"The day will be something I treasure for always," she said.

"I know nan would be beaming from ear to ear. I'm very grateful and honoured to have received this and hope I do nan proud."

Courtney, who said she looks up to the 'role model' young royals, will have one of the best views as the bride and groom arrive and depart the ceremony.

Details of what the day will involve are scant at this stage but she said she is most looking forward to sharing the 'once in a lifetime experience' with the other people who have been invited for their amazing achievements.

Courtney was nominated by Didcot mayor Jackie Billington in a process that involved Tim Stevenson, the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and Jane Cranston, the High Sherriff of Oxfordshire.

A total of 2,640 members of the public, including Courtney, have been invited on the day, while around 600 people are invited to the service.

She added that she will wear her BCA to the once-in-a-lifetime event "as a thank you to everyone who has supported me over the last seven years".

She said: "Without the donations and help from everyone else, Secret Santa never would be as big as it is.

"For Harry and Meghan to not only acknowledge that, but include you, well that's just amazing.

"I'm extremely emotional. I keep thinking what it's going to be like and how nan would be feeling about it all."

Courtney Hughes will wear her BCA to the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle at St George's Chapel

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Rally team prepare for fundraising India trip

A TEAM of Oxfordshire and Berkshire businessmen are on the run... across India.

Eight friends are taking on a road rally from Chennai to Goa later this month to raise cash for charity.

They will be travelling in a Hindustan Ambassador – voted the best taxi in the world by Richard Hammond – driving 2,389km (1,484 miles) from April 22 to May 2.

The team led by Chris Pengilly (team name Fat Boy Slim) from Kingwood, Henley, includes Dr John Delfosse (Doc) from Harwell.

The journey takes in some of the most striking scenery in India from historical cities to the edge of forests with tigers and elephants and from temples to the stunning beaches of Goa.

The intrepid group is raising funds for the International Refugee Trust and specifically its StepUp project in Uganda which changes lives for good.

Other team members include Kevin Rapson (Sir Rabbit) of Emmer Green, Mark Barrett (Yogi Bear) of Burghfield, Steve Belam (Rocket) of Kingwood, Henley, Bill Bucknell (Baron) of Bucklebury, Richard Woodhead (Woody) of Bucklebury and Chris Keen (Stag) of Reading.

Vans from Rabbits Vehicle Hire, owned by Kevin Rapson, will be sporting Race Across India stickers.

For a donation of £250 and more your name will be put on a Rabbits vehicle displayed in The Oracle, Reading, when the crew return.

To donate go to www.justgiving.com/fundraising/raceacrossindia.

Dr John Delfosse gets ready to give the team their injections ahead of the trip and inset, the taxi they will travel in

Ex-care staff deny elderly abuse charges

THREE former workers at a Wallingford care home have denied allegations of abuse against elderly residents between 2015 and 2017.

Elizabeth Collins, 61, of Kynaston Road, Didcot, is charged with wilful neglect of a resident and six counts of breaching a care provider's duty at Winterbrook Nursing Home.

Mary Craddock, 59, of Egerton Road, Wallingford, is charged with five counts of wilful neglect and Joan Lovell, 63, of St Leonard's Lane, Wallingford, with three counts.

All three appeared at Oxford Magistrates' Court on Tuesday and entered not guilty pleas to all charges.

The women, who have each been granted unconditional bail, are due to appear at Oxford Crown Court on May 11.

The home was bought by new owners Wallingford Care Ltd last month and has gone from being in special measures to 'requires improvement' in a Care Quality Commission report released last month.

New-look plans for county's healthcare to be unveiled

HEALTH bosses will next week outline revised plans to improve services across the county.

The new plan, which will be scrutinised by campaigners, comes after the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group unanimously agreed to scrap the second phase of the controversial Transformation Plan into how health services are provided across the county.

Lou Patten, the chief executive of the OCCG, and Dr Kiren Collison, its new clinical chair, will deliver the strategy at Healthwatch Oxfordshire's board meeting on Tuesday.

Healthwatch executive director Rosalind Pearce said: "The OCCG recently said it is to change the way it approaches consulting the public.

"We look forward to hearing more detail, as it's of huge interest to everyone who uses health and care services in our county."

The presentation is conveniently entitled 'The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's change in approach to health transformation including joined up health and social care engagement and consultations'.

The meeting takes place at Oxford Town Hall from 7pm to 9pm.

There will be 15 minutes at 7pm when the public can speak to board members.

The public can also ask questions for clarification at the end of each agenda item.

The full agenda and papers can be viewed at tinyurl.com/h463hhn

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Ex-church minister guilty of sex abuse

A FORMER church minister has been convicted of multiple sexual offences against 10 boys in Oxfordshire.

Robert Dando, 53, of no fixed abode, was sentenced to nine years and four months in prison following a hearing at Oxford Crown Court on Monday.

He pleaded guilty to 17 sexual offences including numerous counts of indecent assault, counts of assault of a boy by penetration and assault by touching from 1985 to 2008.

The youngest victim was 11-years-old.

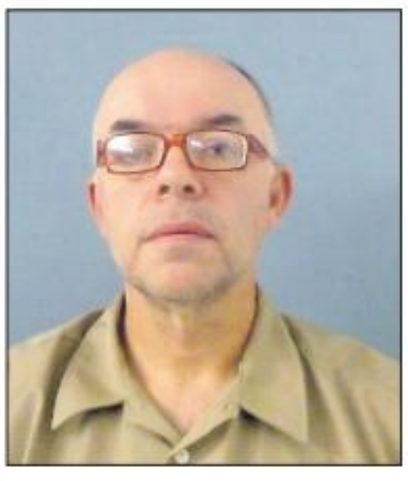
Dando was arrested on August 15 last year after he was escorted back to the UK from the United States of America by their immigration officials. He was then arrested by Thames Valley Police officers when he landed back in the UK.

He was charged the following day.

Dando used his positions of authority as a minister at Orchard Baptist Church in Bicester and as a governor at a school in Bicester to carry out the abuse.

Senior investigating officer, Detective Inspector Larry Johnson, said: "Dando was a prolific offender and used his position of standing to abuse young boys.

"The victims have been through an extremely traumatic ordeal and I would like to thank them for their bravery in coming forward and making sure that Dando has been put behind bars."



Robert Dando pleaded guilty to 17 sexual offences against 10 boys between 1985 and 2008

Woman 'acting erratically' on train, struck children

DETAILS of a woman who 'struck' her children on the train between Reading and Didcot have been released.

A passenger reported the woman was 'acting erratically' and 'shouting at the children' before 'striking' them, British Transport Police (BTP) said.

The incident happened just before 2.20pm on Wednesday last week.

The woman is described as white, in her late twenties, 5ft 10ins tall and of large build. She was wearing a black bomber coat.

BTP said she left the service with the children at Didcot.

Contact police on 0800 40 50 40 with information.

Railway centre honoured by Queen

By George Welch

HAVING celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, Didcot Railway Centre remains on the right track after scooping a major award.

John Harwood, the vice lord-lieutenant of Oxfordshire, presented the Station Road museum with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services (QAVS) on Saturday.

The award, dubbed the voluntary groups' equivalent to the MBE, is in recognition of 'quality outstanding service and achievement'.

Didcot Railway Centre was praised for sustaining the UK's engineering heritage, attracting lots of visitors and inspiring young people.

Commercial manager at the railway centre Ann Middleton said: "We are honoured and proud to receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services.

"This is one of the biggest moments in our 50 year history, and is a great reflection on the work and efforts of the many volunteers that help run and sustain the centre."

Mr Harwood was full of praise for Didcot Railway Centre: "It preserves and sustains one of the most important parts of our country's engineering heritage, and does so in a way which attracts large number of visitors, many of them from well beyond Oxfordshire and continues to inspire the young people of today.

"The assessors for the award were impressed by the education links which have been established with local schools and especially the successful efforts which have been made to involve girls and women in all the aspects of the centre's activities including engineering."

The QAVS is only awarded to voluntary organisations and charities for outstanding service and achievement.

The standards for the award, instituted in 2003, are very high. Only 30 other organisations in Oxfordshire have received the award.

Winners must be run wholly or predominantly by volunteers, must be local, meet a need or provide a service, do so to the highest standards, and be recognised for so doing.

John Harwood, vice lord-lieutenant of Oxfordshire, left, presents the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to Richard Croucher, chairman of the Great Western Society. Back from left, Cllr Reg Waite, chairman of Vale of White Horse District Council; Glyn Hall, president of Didcot Chamber of Commerce; Cllr Zoé Patrick, chairman of Oxfordshire County Council; Elizabeth Paris, deputy lieutenant of Oxfordshire. **Picture**: *Frank Dumbleton*

"The Didcot Railway Centre clearly met all of these standards," Mr Harwood said.

Cinema hopeful for summer screenings

AN Abingdon cinema will move from its temporary home into a new space at the Abbey Hall this summer.

The Regal Cinema will rent the historic building for the next two years after plans submitted to Abingdon Town Council were approved on March 27.

Proposals to turn the hall into a community hub with multiple public services such as a library, information centre and joint reception and other council services will start from summer 2020.

The Regal attracted almost 8,000 customers to its temporary home in the Unicorn Theatre.

Income from the cinema at the Abbey Hall will support the ongoing running costs of the Guildhall.

Ian Wiper of the Regal Cinema said: "We are delighted with this recommendation and look forward to working with the town council.

"If all goes as expected, we hope to launch in the summer of 2018 with Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again.

"I would like to thank everyone who has visited us so far, our staff at the Unicorn and for the support we have received from people in the town."

Town councillor Mike Badcock said the plans were "positively received" and the council is "working hard to ensure the outstanding matters are resolved".

Regal Cinema's Ian Wiper will work with Councillor Mike Badcock to open the cinema in the Abbey Hall

Police have released CCTV of two women they would like to speak to

Elderly man has pocket picked

POLICE want to speak to these two women after an elderly man had cash stolen from his jacket pocket in an Abingdon shop.

An elderly couple were watched in Santander in Bury Street, last Tuesday at about 12.45pm.

The man withdrew money and was watched by two women. They followed him to the Timpson store, also in Bury Street.

It was in the high street retailer where one of the women barged into the man and stole the cash from his jacket pocket.

After that, the two women walked away.

PC Ollie Adams, based at Abingdon Police Station, said the women could have 'vital' information about the incident.

He added: "This is a particularly concerning incident where vulnerable victims in our community have been actively targeted and suffered financial loss as a result of this crime."

Contact police on 101 quoting reference 43180099319 with information.

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Police given power to tackle unruly groups

By George Welch

POLICE officers will be handed new powers to tackle anti-social behaviour in Thame following complaints from the community about unruly conduct.

Groups of three or more people will not be allowed to meet in public areas of the south Oxfordshire town if they are deemed to be behaving anti-socially.

Those causing problems could be fined if they refuse to move when requested to do so by officers, who can use their new powers from May 1.

South Oxfordshire District Council is introducing the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) following concerns raised by the community.

The order received strong support during a public consultation last year and was approved by cabinet last week. It will only target anti-social behaviour and will not prevent groups from gathering together peacefully, the authority stressed.

Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie, SODC's cabinet member for community safety, said: "The new public spaces protection order gives police in Thame greater powers to address anti-social behaviour caused by groups congregating in public areas. This could include those intimidating passers-by or anyone repeatedly causing a nuisance.

"PSPOs can be tailored to the needs of a specific town. The measures we have included to tackle group-related problems in Thame received significant support from the local community."

People will be asked to move on if they are considered to be behaving anti-socially, or likely to cause alarm, distress or be a nuisance to those nearby in public spaces.

The Thame community was quizzed on proposals last year.

SODC said it received 241 responses during the four-week consultation, with 92 per cent in favour of giving police powers to tackle anti-social behaviour.

The same percentage of people also supported reducing the age range for the new powers to start from those aged 16 plus rather than from 18.

The new powers will compliment the force's current ability, covered by the town's Designated Public Places Order (DPPO), to confiscate alcohol from people behaving anti-socially in public areas.

If they refuse to hand the alcohol over they can be fined. The DPPO only applies to public areas and not to licensed premises.

Marenglen Dulaj admitted dumping the waste in April last year

Cannabis plants dumped

A 'SELFISH' fly-tipper has been fined more than £1,600 after dumping garden waste, including cannabis plants, in a south Oxfordshire country road.

Marenglen Dulaj, 43, from Swindon, abandoned multiple compost sacks on land off Exlade Street, between Woodcote and Checkendon, in April last year.

The dumped sacks contained compost, plant pots, plastic bottles, cardboard and green waste consisting of cannabis stalks and leaves.

While Dulaj told the court he had loaned the vehicle to a friend, he was still liable as he was the owner of the vehicle at that time.

He pleaded guilty to the charge of using a motor vehicle to fly-tip at Oxford Magistrates' Court, on March 27.

Dulaj has been ordered to pay £1,636.42 in total, made up of an £850 fine, a victim surcharge of £85, £500 in costs and £201.42 compensation.

Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie, South Oxfordshire District Council cabinet member responsible for environmental protection, said: "Fly-tipping is an extremely selfish act which scars the countryside and has an aesthetic and financial cost for residents.

"We will always prosecute offenders whenever possible."

Fly-tipping can be reported to SODC at tinyurl.com/y9rapycf and to the Vale of White Horse District Council at tinyurl.com/ycawfn8v

Caravan gutted and cars damaged in fire

A RAGING fire tore through a caravan in Faringdon, 'totally destroying' it before fire crews could extinguish it.

Firefighters were called to the blaze in Marlborough Gardens at 11.20pm on Monday last week.

The first crews arrived within 10 minutes of the 999 call being made but it was too late as the caravan was already destroyed and two cars parked next to it were severely damaged.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service teams from Faringdon, Wantage and Bampton were sent to the scene.

Station manager Paul Webster said: "Fortunately, no one was hurt on this occasion, the caravan was totally destroyed before the arrival of crews.

"The intensity of the fire also severely damaged two cars adjacent to the fire.

Thames Valley Police and fire investigation officers are working to determine the cause of the fire.

The caravan was completely destroyed within just 10 minutes of the 999 call being made

Woman's eye socket fractured in assault

IMAGES of men wanted in connection with an assault in Henley which left a woman needing surgery have been released.

She suffered a fractured eye socket in an attack outside Smoky Flame in Greys Road between 10pm and 10.30pm on March 14.

Police say she was attacked by a group of men.

A 45-year-old man was also assaulted and sustained cuts and bruises.

A 38-year-old man from Reading has been arrested and released under investigation.

Contact police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 if you have any information about the men involved.

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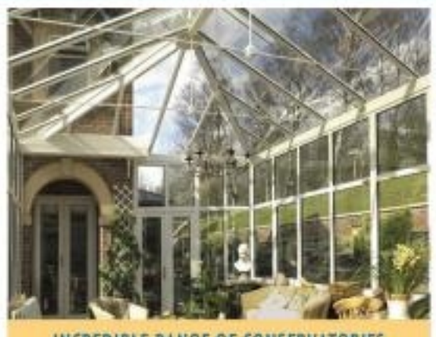
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News

Two escape car after fire

TWO people managed to escape their car after it caught fire on the motorway.

Fire crews were called to the car fire on the M40 on Monday morning.

It happened just before 10am between Bicester and Cherwell Valley services in north Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue said the two people travelling in the car were able to pull over and get out when it caught fire.

Schoolboy inventor's 'hearing glasses' win Ideas for Ears award

By Owen Hughes

A YOUNG inventor from Oxford was presented with an award in Austria for his idea to help people with hearing loss to see things they can't hear.

Rye St Anthony School pupil Jacob Levy was selected as one of two winners of the global Ideas for Ears competition in December and presented with his award during a ceremony in Innsbruck last week.

The competition was organised by technology business MED-EL to encourage youngsters between six and 11 years old to dream up new and imaginative ways of helping people with hearing loss.

Jacob came up with the idea for 'hearing glasses' that would translate sounds into written words for the wearer to read in front of their eyes.

Conversations would be translated into written text and scroll across the bottom of the lens, or sounds such as a barking dog would pop up as an image in the corner of the frame.

Jacob came up with the genius idea after watching a programme in which glasses could connect to a phone via Bluetooth to play sounds.

The Year 5 pupil said: "Going on the winners trip to MED-EL headquarters in Austria was an awesome experience.

"It was really interesting to visit the factory and see the engineers working in a clean room where they keep the work area sterile and replace all the air every minute to stop contaminants entering the hearing implants they are making.

"I loved meeting the MED-EL inventors who have changed the lives of many thousands of people with hearing loss.

"It was also amazing to see the mountains and play the fun games at the AudioVersum Museum of Sound in Innsbruck."

Geoffrey Bell, chief technical officer at MED-EL presents Jacob Levy with his award in Austria

Jacob made the trip to Europe with his dad and also met Geoffrey Bell, the chief technical officer at MED-EL and inventor of the Vibrant Soundbridge middle ear implant.

The device allows people with hearing loss who can't wear hearing aids to convert signals into mechanical vibrations in the inner ear, which the brain perceives as sounds.

Mum's childhood inspires run

By Owen Hughes

A HENLEY great-grandmother who was abandoned during the war has inspired her daughter to run in the London Marathon.

Betty Wheeler, known affectionately as 'Bean', was left for safe keeping at a children's home when she was two years old but was never collected by her parents.

Betty was raised by The Children's Society, the charity which runs the children's home, for her childhood.

Now 80 years old, Betty has four children of her own and her daughter and son-in-law are gearing up to run the London Marathon on April 22 in support of the charity.

Hayley and Terry Reeves, from Henley, were inspired to take up the running challenge when Betty celebrated her 80th birthday last year and received a card from The Children's Society's chief executive wishing her well.

Hearing Betty reminisce about her happy years in the home, the couple decided to fundraise for the charity by taking on the 26.2 mile challenge, despite never running before.

Hayley said: "Mum had always talked very affectionately about her childhood in The Children's Society home, Grenville House, in Ascot.

"We had actually been to visit the charity's archives in the past and found her case files and that was really interesting.

"She had seven siblings and although her parents didn't collect her from the home after the war, she was able to trace her family.

"Due to having a lovely time in the home, she has always had such a positive outlook on life; it's fantastic."

Hayley and Terry will be running as part of a team of almost 100 raising funds for The Children's Society and are hoping to raise £4,000 overall.

The charity no longer runs children's homes but still supports vulnerable children by managing other national services that support young people affected by issues including poverty, abuse or neglect.

Hayley and Terry Reeves and inset, mum Betty Wheeler

Laura Balcombe, from The Children's Society, said: "It's wonderful they have such a close connection to the charity through Betty and we are so glad she has such happy memories."

Hayley and Terry's sponsorship page can be viewed at: https://bit.ly/2H7l6u3

Inquest hears of boy found dead on road with multiple injuries

A 14-year-old schoolboy found dead on a road near Coventry died of multiple wounds, an inquest has heard.

The body of James Scott, known as Jamie, was found in the middle of the A45 on the evening of March 11, Mother's Day.

The details of the Cherwell School pupil's death were revealed when the coroner for Warwickshire opened an inquest into his death last week.

Unconfirmed reports say that the teenager had been at Crufts at the nearby NEC earlier that weekend.

The inquest heard he died as a result of his injuries but the exact reason Jamie came to be in the road is still being investigated.

A spokesperson for Warwickshire Police previously said: "Officers were called at 7.12pm on Sunday, March 11, to the A45 in Meriden.

"A body was found on the road and the person was sadly pronounced dead at the scene.

"The death is being treated as unexplained and police are appealing for anyone who saw a pedestrian in the area to come forward."

Anyone who has any information is asked to call police on 101, quoting incident 328 of March 11.

InBrief

Tool thefts from vans

PARKED vans were targeted during a spate of break-ins in Didcot.

Four incidents were reported to Thames Valley Police overnight on Thursday and Friday last week.

Power tools were taken between 7pm and 6.20am in Kibble Close and, on the same road, between 2pm and 6.30am, a satnav was stolen from another van.

More tools were stolen from a van in Oxford Crescent between 7pm and 7am.

Then, between 5.30pm and 9.30am, a fourth van was broken into while it was parked in Fleet Way. Entry was gained via the side of the vehicle and power tools were stolen.

Contact police on 101 with information.

Compost giveaway

GARDENERS can get their hands dirty at South Oxfordshire District Council's annual compost giveaway this weekend.

The council is inviting people to collect locally produced compost for free between 9am and 11am at Benson Parish Hall car park on Saturday.

Gardeners are reminded not to forget a shovel and container.

All compost given away is made from the garden waste collected from residents.

Free kitchen food caddies and liners will also be given away, while stocks last.

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News

Gritters journey 90,000 miles round the county

By George Welch

Gritters lined up at the council's Deddington Depot

OXFORDSHIRE'S gritters truly went the extra mile this winter having trekked 90,000 miles – nearly four times around the world.

The scale of the work carried out by the county council teams was revealed last week now the worst of the weather is – hopefully – over.

In total, the gritters were sent out on 76 occasions from November to March, a marked increase on the 45 times the previous winter.

The council also had to put the snowploughs on to the gritters four times, something that had not been needed in the county since 2012/13.

More than 16,000 tonnes of rock salt were used and in excess of 90,000 miles covered by the gritters this winter, equating to 3.7 times around the world.

Paul Wilson, who oversees the council's gritting operation, said: "It was certainly a winter with a far different character than most of those we've had this decade."

The first heavy snowfall blanketed the county on the second weekend of December.

Mr Wilson said: "We sent the gritters out with the snowploughs attached and managed to get all the main roads clear – but that was quite some snow event for Oxfordshire and there were some particularly low temperatures in the nights following that meant the snow hung around for a while.

"We had another very active period between Christmas and New Year before further busy times during January and February."

The Beast from the East struck vast swathes of the county in February, but it was Storm Emma at the start of March that was more testing for Oxfordshire, Mr Wilson said.

He thanked those who helped in the winter operation, including farmers, but particularly the gritter drivers who were out on the roads at some very unsociable hours and in inhospitable conditions.

The county council's gritters cover 1,200 miles of road on one gritting run – covering all A-roads, B-roads and some C-roads. Highways England covers the A34, A43 and M40.

MP backs hunting petition

OXFORD East MP Anneliese Dodds has signed a petition calling for hunting legislation to be strengthened, amid growing concerns that British wildlife is still being targeted due to loopholes in the law.

The Labour politician met representatives from the League Against Cruel Sports, which launched the petition and claims 'trail' hunting is being used as a cover for illegal hunting.

Campaigners say this has led to wildlife being chased and killed in the name of 'sport'.

Ms Dodds spoke out against hunting last year after the Boxing Day hunts, which included the Heythrop Hunt in Chipping Norton.

Signing the petition this month she said: "I am very happy to support the League Against Cruel Sports' petition, to ensure that wild animals can no longer be killed by hunts.

"Many people assume that since the ban on hunting with dogs in England, Scotland and Wales has been in force, our foxes, hares and other wild animals are safe.

"But I was shocked to hear how many hunts are getting around the rules and making a mockery of the ban.

"We need to act now to stop this travesty and properly protect our wildlife from cruelty."

Visit tinyurl.com/y8ey9jvh for more information and to sign the petition.

Smoke from bathroom fire fills house

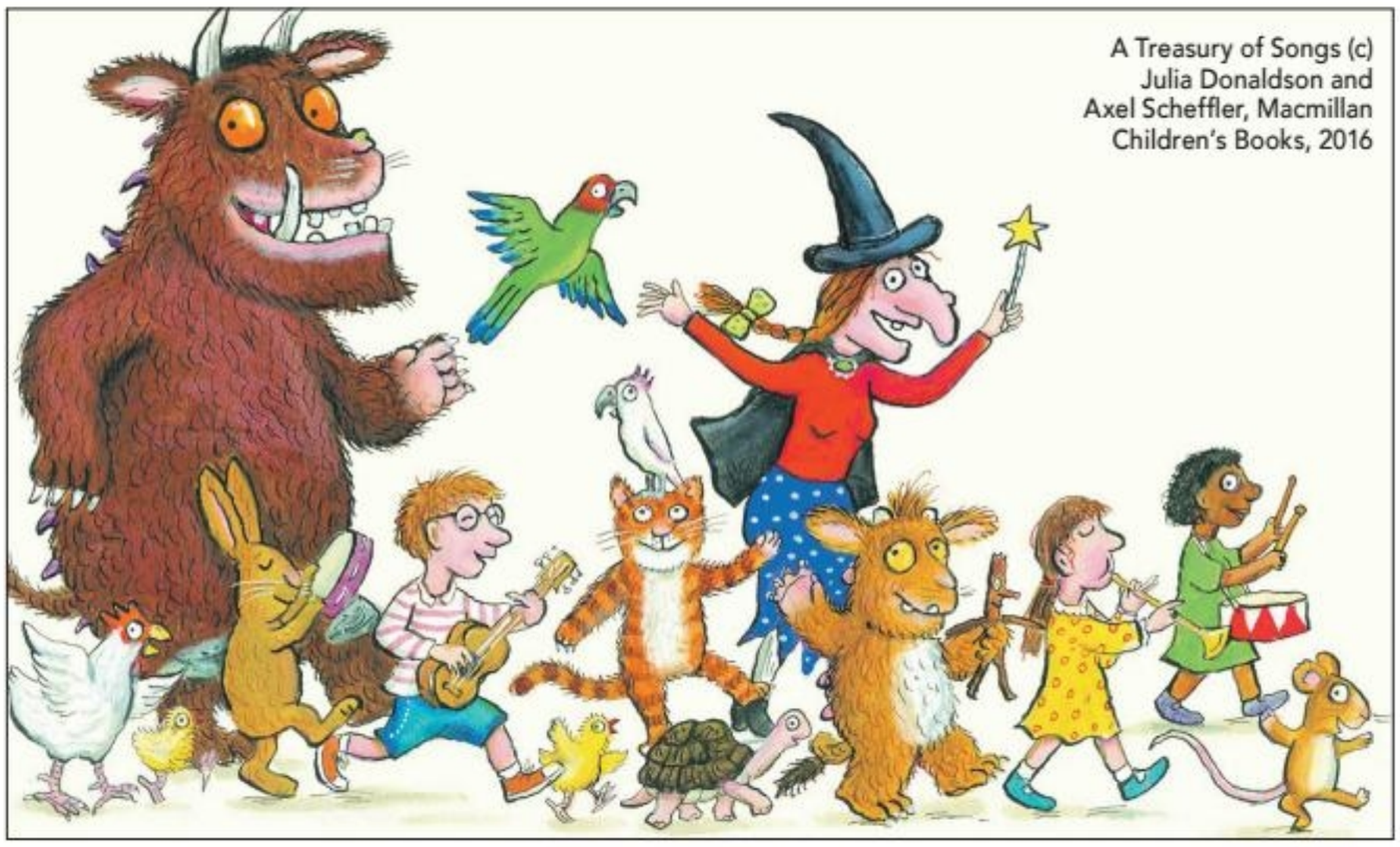
FIRE crews were called to deal with a bathroom fire in Langford on Sunday.

The homeowners were alerted to the second floor fire by the smoke alarm and were able to evacuate before emergency services arrived.

Three crews from Burford, Faringdon and Chipping Norton fire stations attended around 4.10pm.

Station manager Paul Webster said: "Whilst the fire was fairly small and only involved direct burning of an electric shower and the plastic shower enclosure unit, it did produce a lot of smoke which spread throughout the house."

The cause of the fire is being investigated.



A Treasury of Songs (c) Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, Macmillan Children's Books, 2016

Pupils join the Gruffalo

AWARD-WINNING children's author Julia Donaldson will join hundreds of schoolchildren in a musical extravaganza later this month.

The creator of The Gruffalo will perform her popular live show alongside 900 youngsters from 28 schools at the county's Centre for Music in Headington.

The youngsters will take part in three performances on April 25, in front of packed-out audiences of family and friends, and will sing along to songs from her famous stories.

The shows feature musical numbers from the songbook A Treasury of Songs.

Jess Gray, central area manager for the county music service, said: "It's a real privilege to welcome Julia Donaldson to our Centre for Music.

"To have so many schools taking part and learning the songs is fantastic, and I'm sure it will be a memorable day for everyone involved."

Julia, who received an MBE in 2011 for services to literature, began her career in theatre which is how she met her husband Malcolm.

Oxfordshire's Centre for Music is located on Bayswater Road, Headington.

Cash boost for pilot heart study

PATIENTS with aortic stenosis could receive better treatment after Oxford University scientists were given a significant cash boost to treat those with the debilitating heart condition.

Dr Masliza Mahmod and her team have been handed £290,000 from the British Heart Foundation (BHF) to carry out a six-month pilot study.

Sixty people from Oxford hospitals will take part in the trial, which aims to reduce excessive and toxic heart fat – known as cardiac steatosis – by targeting it with a fat-busting drug.

Results from the study could suggest a way for doctors to help patients manage their condition.

Aortic stenosis is a narrowing of the aortic valve. It limits the flow of blood through the valve into the aorta and forces the heart to work harder in order to pump blood around the body.

Dr Mahmod, head of clinical trials group at the Oxford Centre for Clinical Magnetic Resonance Research, said:

Dr Masliza Mahmod

"If we can show that these fat-busting drugs improve the heart ability to pump blood around the body in aortic stenosis, then it would give doctors a way to help people manage their condition with medication."

Dr Shannon Amoils, senior research advisor at the BHF, added: "If the concept behind it is proven, then the potential is there to use fibrates as a new treatment for aortic stenosis after larger trials."

Phone stolen from shop display

POLICE believe this man could have 'vital' information about a mobile phone theft in Oxford.

Officers said a man entered the Vodafone shop on Cornmarket Street and took a mobile phone that was on display and left without paying for it.

The incident happened at around 6pm on Saturday, January 20.

Contact police on 101 quoting reference 43180020791 if you recognise the man or have any information.

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News

Celebrating 100 years of the RAF

By George Welch

THE RAF's 100th anniversary celebrations were kick-started in style as Oxfordshire marked the 'tremendous contribution' made by its forces.

A special centenary baton is being taken on 100 stops over 100 days to commemorate the RAF's foundation in April 1918.

Its first stop in the county was at RAF Benson, where it remained overnight on April 3 before flying in dramatic fashion to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Headington via Puma helicopter.

It was then carried on a tour through the hospital by RAF personnel.

Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) NHS Foundation Trust's armed forces champion, David Smith, said receiving the baton was an 'honour' for the hospital.

He added: "It's fantastic that we're able to be part of the baton route, and able to take time to celebrate the RAF's contribution to our hospital and local area.

"The Trust is also taking this opportunity to thank all of our military staff for their hard work and dedication – they're an invaluable part of our hospital and an asset to us."

It was RAF Brize Norton's turn to celebrate last Thursday with its commander, Timothy Jones, Horus 7's Rugby Team, the station's Go Karting club, the Triathlon Club, the Saddle Club, station personnel and their families all in attendance.

The west Oxfordshire base is the RAF's largest base, with about 5,800 service personnel, 1,200 contractors and about 300 civilian staff.

The baton, which features the RAF crest and RAF100 logo, was designed by young RAF recruits using materials that symbolise aircraft construction through the ages.

It will return to Oxfordshire when it makes an appearance at the Henley Royal Regatta on July 6.

The baton will end its journey at Horseguards Parade in London on July 10, 100 days after it set off from the Royal Courts of Justice, in the capital, on April 1.

Visit raf.mod.uk/raf100/ for more information.

The baton went on a tour through John Radcliffe Hospital and below, LOC Emma Ockendon from Benson,CWO Rosie Herridge from Brize Norton and JR-based nurse CPL Natasha Balyckyi who walked the baton through the hospital

RAF Benson pictures: *Tony Hawke/ MoD*
RAF Brize Norton pictures: *MoD*

Brize Norton's triathlon club joined the baton relay and below, FG Ed Atkinson hands the baton to Cpl Rob Bugden of the Brize Norton rugby 7s

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News

Warning after car pulled from flood waters

MOTORISTS have been warned against driving through flood water after a car had to be rescued on a remote south Oxfordshire road.

Firefighters saved two people after their vehicle got stuck in deep water on a single track road near Tadpole Bridge, Buckland Marsh.

Crews managed to winch the car and occupants to safety at around 1.15pm on Thursday last week.

The road, which is used as a cut through between Buckland Marsh and Chimley, was closed by Thames Valley Police and traffic diverted to stop other vehicles getting trapped.

Crews from Witney, Faringdon, and Wantage fire stations and a specialist water rescue unit from Wiltshire were called to the stuck car.

Incident commander Graham Turner said: "It is always tempting to take a chance and drive through flood water, but unless you are absolutely certain it is safe to do so, we would strongly recommend people take the sensible option and use another route, even if this adds time and distance to the journey.

"Thankfully, on this occasion, there were no injuries – apart from the driver's pride and some wet feet – but he still faces a hefty repair bill as a result of the water entering both the engine compartment and the car itself."

Medics pioneering work up for cancer care award

By George Welch

The Oxford Reproductive Tissue Cryopreservation Team

THE country's only 'comprehensive' fertility preservation treatment programme for children and young people with cancer has been shortlisted for a major national award.

More than 80 per cent of children and young adults diagnosed with cancer now survive the disease but infertility is a common and life-changing complication of treatment.

The Oxford Reproductive Tissue Cryopreservation (ORTC) team at Oxford Children's Hospital is in the running for the Cancer Care Team accolade at The British Medical Journal Awards next month.

The ORTC programme, which saw its first patients in 2013, now cryopreserves – freezes – the reproductive tissue of more than 150 youngsters nationwide every year.

It is the only service of its kind in the UK and seen as a 'ground-breaking' service for young cancer patients.

Consultant paediatric oncologist Dr Sheila Lane, clinical lead for the ORTC service, said: "At first all our patients had to come to Oxford but in the last 12 months we have developed a 'hub and spoke' model which means that children and young people can have tissue collected at a local hospital before it is transported to Oxford for processing and storage.

"Our service has had a very significant impact on childhood cancer care across the UK.

"In 2013, there was no fertility service for children and young adults about to start cancer treatment.

"Now all children and young adult cancer patients at risk of infertility have access to our specialist service."

The service's youngest patient was just six months old and the average age of patients is 14.

Dr Douglas Graham, chief executive of Oxford Hospitals Charity, which helped fund and grow the ORTC service, said: "By offering fertility preservation, patients and their families are given the hope of a positive future and are able to focus on life beyond cancer – and that is simply priceless.

"As a charity we are very proud to be supporting this ground-breaking service."

Psychology research undertaken as part of the ORTC programme has shown that fertility preservation treatment reduces patients' anxiety and depression during and after cancer treatment.

Picture: Hannah Boschen

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Grand way to spend a day

Picture: Karen Dunkley

Picture: Hannah Boschen

SHOPPERS can enjoy a Grand Day Out spotting Gromit in the Westgate.

Models of the much-loved dog by fans of Wallace and Gromit are on show at the £440m centre as part of a special Gromit trail.

Fans of the clay animation comedy series, created by Nick Park, can buy a Gromit Unleashed map for £2 and follow the Easter trail of 10 sculptures throughout the centre.

Proceeds from the trail will go to the Bristol Children's Hospital Charity's Grand Appeal. Aardman Animations, which produces the films, is based in Bristol.

Gromit will be in town until Sunday.

Time to mark your 'X' and choose local councillors

By George Welch

VOTERS will head to the polls in less than a month's time for key local elections.

All voters in Oxford will have a chance to cast their opinion, along with some others in Cherwell and West Oxfordshire, on May 3.

Hinksey Park representative Bob Price is the most prominent councillor stepping down, having been a councillor since 1983. He also led the Labour-run Oxford City Council for 10 years until he stood down in January.

The local government elections are a chance for voters to select their councillors who are responsible for making decisions on running services where they live.

These include housing, education, transport, planning, parks, leisure, fire and public safety, social care and waste management.

In the city, all 24 wards will have ballots while 17 seats are up for grabs in both Cherwell and West Oxfordshire.

People are reminded to make sure they are registered to vote.

Electors have until midnight on April 17 to register, and the last day for postal vote applications is at 5pm the next day, April 18.

Electoral Commission regional manager Philippa Saray said: "If you have turned 18 or have moved home recently it's particularly important you are registered."

If you were eligible to vote in last year's general election and your details have not changed you should still be on the electoral roll.

If in doubt, check your details with the electoral registration officer for your area: Cherwell District Council 01295 227005, Oxford City Council 01865 249811, West Oxfordshire District Council 01993 861450.

Register at gov.uk/registertovote

Off-duty firefighter to the rescue at flats

AN off-duty firefighter in Didcot raised the alarm after a fire broke out in a second-floor flat.

The officer was at Great Western Park when he heard the Greenwood Way flat's smoke alarm going off at 10.20pm on Monday last week.

After calling for back-up, crews from Wallingford, Abingdon and Oxford attended the scene.

When they got inside they discovered the flat's sprinkler system had already suppressed the fire.

The occupant of the flat, which is owned by Oxford City Council, has been rehomed until repair work is carried out.

Station manager Paul Webster said without the sprinklers the fire "would have continued to grow".

He added: "Thankfully there was no one in the property at the time of the fire but smoke alarms alerted the rest of the residents in the block of flats.

"There is no doubt that if the flat had not got a domestic sprinkler

system, then the whole flat would have become involved in fire so the level of damage would have been far worse."

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Call for drivers to help patients

EMERGENCY services have said they were 'overwhelmed' by the hundreds of 4x4 drivers who offered to help during the worst of the snow disruption earlier this year.

South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) is again appealing for volunteer car drivers who would be able to offer more regular assistance across Oxfordshire.

Its non-emergency patient transport service helps hundreds of people attend planned hospital and medical appointments every day.

The service is supported by a professional team of volunteer drivers.

Last year (March 2017-March 2018), the volunteer car driver team took 21,876 patients to and from appointments and covered 527,121 miles – the equivalent of driving coast-to-coast across America about 165 times.

But more drivers are required.

SCAS said no previous experience is necessary, just a friendly and caring attitude along with a valid UK driving licence with no more than three penalty points, and access to a modern and reliable four door car.

Volunteers will also need to be at least 18 years old and be prepared to undertake DBS and occupational health checks.

Visit scas.nhs.uk/volunteer-car-drivers for more information and email your name and the area you live in to volunteer.cardriver@scas.nhs.uk

A dog house, you'll want to be in...

Anne Robinson with grandchildren Hudson, standing, and Parker and her cocker spaniels Picture: *Nigel Davies/ Blue Cross*

TV presenter Anne Robinson proved she was not the Weakest Link after helping create a doggy dream house in aid of pets in need.

The game show hostess and dog lover, who has two cocker spaniels, helped design a kennel to be auctioned later this month and raise funds for Burford-based Blue Cross.

Pictured with the finished kennel at her Cotswolds home with grandchildren Parker and Hudson, Anne said: "I thoroughly enjoyed being part of this exciting project and am thrilled with the end result.

"My dogs are typical of their breed and always like to run around and keep very busy, but even they could do with a time out session every now and then.

"These stunning dog homes are the perfect space for a bit of 'me time' for any four legged friend."

Anne worked with a Liverpool architect business to design the kennel, which is among others designed by celebrities including singer Russell Watson, presenter Ben Fogle and fashion designer Bruce Oldfield for a special exhibition.

The unique kennels, which were revealed at Crufts last month, will be on display at Stratford International rail station until April 26 when they will be auctioned off in aid of Blue Cross and US arts organisation Outdoor Arts Foundation.

Visit tinyurl.com/yark6gyj for more information and to bid.

InBrief

Brush up your skills

A CONSERVATION charity aiming to improve life for swifts in Oxford is calling on artists to get their paintbrushes and watercolours out.

The RSPB has launched the Nature in the City art competition, urging creative souls to submit artwork inspired by urban nature.

A photo or scan of artwork should be submitted before May 31 and all shortlisted works will be displayed at the Jam Factory in central Oxford as part of a six-week exhibition.

The winner will receive a hamper of Hobbycraft art supplies worth £60, a £100 RSPB online shop gift card and art class vouchers for 10 life drawing sessions at the Jam Factory.

Submissions should be sent to oxfordswiftcity@rspb.org.uk.

Volunteers are needed to survey Oxford swifts for two evenings a week in May, June and July. Email emily.seccombe@RSPB.org.uk for more.

Business Q&A

ENTERPRISE group OxLEP will hold its second quarterly Q&A event for Oxfordshire business leaders on April 25.

The event is being hosted in partnership with Milton Park and will be held at the Innovation Centre at Milton Park, near Didcot.

It will focus on 'place' and the panel will debate its importance to Oxfordshire.

Visit tinyurl.com/ycyhxq29 for more information and to book.

Bus staff driven by fundraising efforts

By George Welch

TWO bus-driving brothers have swapped pedals for running shoes as they take on the Brighton marathon in memory of their late father.

Pete and Dan Smith, who both drive for Stagecoach in Oxfordshire, will take on the seaside run on Sunday.

Depot controller colleague George Davies, who will run in honour of his grandfather John who passed away from a brain tumour last October, will join the brothers.

Together, the trio will run 78.6 miles between them in memory of their loved ones.

Dan, who has been running for two years, will be joined by older brother Pete, who only began running in May last year when he signed up to the run to raise money for Prostate Cancer UK.

Their dad, also Pete, passed away in August 2015 aged 62.

Dan said: "I got into running shortly before we lost dad and it's been a great focus and challenge for me over the past two and a half years

"Pete and I decided it would be a great to do one together as a way to raise as much as we could for Prostate Cancer UK."

Pete, Dan and George get ready for their marathons

"Most people are really impressed when they hear what we are doing which has helped our fundraising efforts."

The Smith brothers decided to embark on the challenge to celebrate what would have been their father's 65th birthday. It is also the year that Pete turns 30, while Dan turns 25.

Pete added: "Rather than mark this year with a big party we wanted a challenge that helped us celebrate dad.

"I have no doubt the challenge will be tough but thinking of dad will get me through the training and the events...as well as some jelly babies."

Preparing for his part in the challenge, George, 27 from Yarnton, who will run for the Brain Tumour Society, said: "Training is proving quite tough currently as I have a five-month old baby, but the memory of grandad will keep me going.

"I am also focusing on the idea of a couple of pints and a dip in the sea at the end."

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Charity of the year 2018 – Helen & Douglas House, Oxford

Lily-Mae making stars with her mum at Helen House

In the saddle for charity

MORE than 1,500 cyclists will ride through Oxford next month as annual sportive Bike Oxford calls on kind-hearted riders to pedal a good cause.

Nearly £4,500 was raised for terminally ill youngsters at Helen & Douglas House last year but organisers are aiming higher this time around, with funds also being collected for Ronald McDonald House.

Now in its fifth year, 2018 Bike Oxford will take place on May 20 and will start and end at the Oxford University Rugby Football Club ground on Iffley Road.

Riders will again be given the choice of three rides – the 25-mile social or the 50 or 80-mile challenge.

Richard Best, CEO of organisers Iconic Cycling Events, said: "Helen & Douglas House and Ronald McDonald House do some invaluable work within the community so we're very pleased to be supporting them again this year."

Hazel Bedford, from Helen & Douglas House, said the money raised from last year's event was enough to pay for the hospice's outreach team for a week, "which made a big difference to the lives of local terminally ill children and their families".

Ronald McDonald House, based at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Headington, provides free 'home away from home' accommodation for families of children in hospital.

Visit bikeoxford.co.uk for more information and to register/donate.

Nurse draws on her own experiences for families

By George Welch

"WORKING with dying children and their families can be incredibly tough – but there are moments that make it all worthwhile."

Helen & Douglas House nurse Rachel Griffith is no stranger to the trauma of losing a child having tragically lost two children of her own.

The bereaved mother-of-four, who lost two daughters more than a decade ago to a disease that attacked their nervous system, gave a moving talk at a special charity concert about her 13 years work as a nurse at the hospice.

The 48-year-old said hospice work "is not just about suffering" but about developing 'powerful' relationships and making the most of every valuable moment with youngsters with life-limiting illnesses.

She added: "Much of what I deal with on a day-to-day basis revolves around supporting people who are dealing with loss.

"But hospice work is not just about suffering. We can also enable children and families to simply spend time having fun with each other and wonderful opportunities for patients and families to develop powerful relationships with others."

Rachel visited the hospice for respite care for three years after her daughters Misha and Natalie were diagnosed with Late Infantile Batten Disease.

Misha, 7, died in 2002 and Natalie, 5, passed away the following year.

Leaning on her 'heart breaking' experience, Rachel made the stirring speech at a special charity concert by the London Chamber Orchestra at Cadogan Hall in London in February.

The concert was attended by 750 people and raised £14,000 for the East Oxford children's hospice, our charity of the year, and Momiji House, Japan's first children's hospice.

Rachel Griffiths with HRH The Duchess of Cornwall at the London Chamber Orchestra concert in February

Oxfordshire Guardian & THE OXFORD PAPER Supporting Helen & Douglas House hospice care for children and young adults

At the interval Rachel met Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall and Helen & Douglas House patron since 2007.

It was the support received from the hospice that inspired Rachel to become a Helen & Douglas House nurse.

"Helping families is very powerful for me, as a result of my own experience," she said.

"I am mother to four beautiful children, but my eldest two girls suffered from Batten Disease. This broke my heart and changed my life forever."

She added: "Supporting patients and families to achieve their lifetime wishes in the time that they have available to them makes every penny donated priceless and every moment of this job for me worthwhile."

Donations can be made at hdh.org.uk.

Making an impact on children's lives

THE equivalent to 191 hours of doctors' care at Helen & Douglas House could be funded following the 'incredible' fundraising efforts of a property developer.

Northampton-based Redrow Homes, which selected the East Oxford hospice as its charity of the year, raised £4,140 in memory of the firm's marketing coordinator's daughter.

Chase Howie, from Buckingham, passed away at the hospice in July 2015 after a battle with cancer aged just 18.

Her mum, Mandy, is Redrow's marketing coordinator and her colleagues rallied round to support the charity.

Tonia Tyler, from Redrow Homes, said the business wanted to thank Helen & Douglas House for its support.

"They do a tremendous job at looking after those with highly complex medical conditions and enabling families to create memories," she added.

Redrow Homes sales director Tonia Tyler and marketing co-ordinator Mandy Howie, whose daughter Chase was cared for at Helen House, present the cheque to a representative from Helen & Douglas House

Lauren Kemp, head of events and supporter partnerships at the hospice, said: "The money raised by Redrow could pay for 191 hours of highly specialised medical care from our doctors, who are all specialists in paediatric care.

"I hope everyone at Redrow is incredibly proud of the impact they have made to the lives of terminally ill children, young adults and their families."

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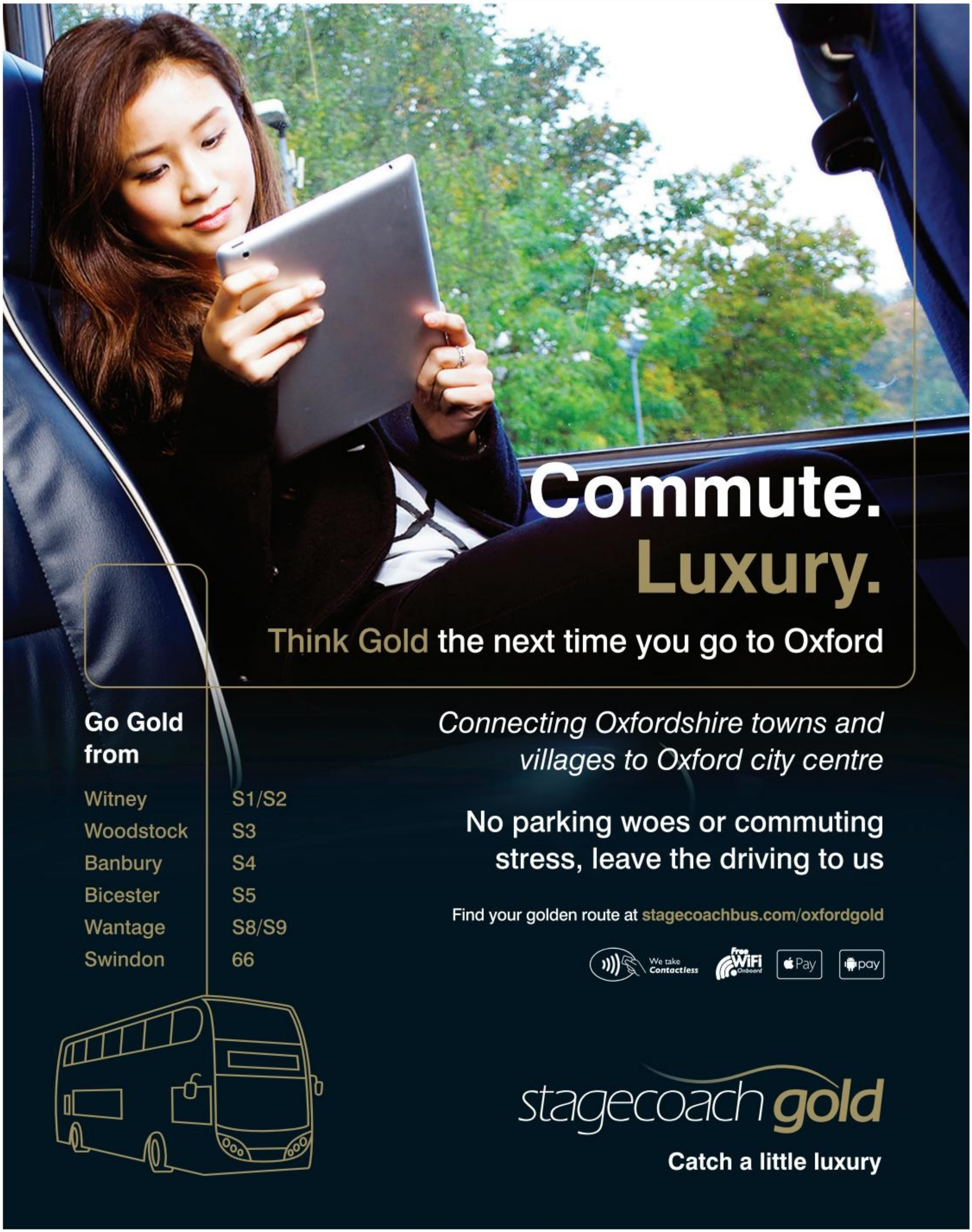

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Back on the road and with a bang!

By Josh Cox

KNOWN for his exhilarating live shows, Miles Kane is back where he belongs, on the road playing 16 headline shows this summer including a night at Oxford's O2 Academy.

"It's been too long since I've been on stage," says Miles. "I cannot wait to get up and perform a high energy set with a couple of new bangers thrown in! Bring it on!"

Miles is currently working on a new record which will be his first solo material since 2013's acclaimed singles Don't Forget Who You Are, Taking Over, Better Than That and Give Up.

Kane is best known as a solo artist and the co-frontman of The Last Shadow Puppets, but, in his early years Miles was also the former frontman of indie band The Rascals.

Over his career Kane has been nominated for a range of awards including Best Solo Artist (twice) and Best Breakthrough Artist.

Inspired by a classic, smart '60s mod theme, Miles Kane is now a household name on the UK music scene.

He will be performing at the O2 Academy on June 2 at 7pm.

Tickets are £23 and can be purchased from ticketmaster.co.uk.

Artists exposing visitors to nature

The work of two passionate artists, whose work expresses as much about them as it does about their chosen landscapes is on display at a gallery in west Oxfordshire.

Both artists have recently held successful exhibitions in their own right, and this exhibition Beyond Observation: Exposing Nature and Self, offers a fusion of their creativity.

While there are similarities between their modes of expression, notably their love of texture, layer and expressive mark-making, each has a distinctive voice.

Nicki Heenan's intricate surfaces are built up in oil and cold wax while Sally Wyatt's paintings are often a web of overlaid colour and mark.

Both artists express a deep understanding of their chosen subjects. This exhibition develops time-honoured themes about nature and atmosphere in new and exciting ways that are both universal and deeply personal.

The artists will be on-hand in the West Ox Arts Gallery at weekends to talk about their work, giving visitors the opportunity to meet them and discuss their pieces.

Perfectly summing up her work in the exhibition Nicki says "nature is at the very heart of my paintings and provides the ever changing muse".

Sally has a wealth of experience having studied Geo-sciences at university and working in the decorative arts sector for more than 30 years.

West Ox Arts Gallery can be found at The Old Town Hall in Bampton, near Witney. The exhibition runs until April 21.

For more information on the exhibition call 01993 850137 or email gallery@westoxarts.com.

Hustle and bustle

O'Neill's in Oxford will welcome local band Hustler on April 27 as they deliver a range of covers from the likes of The Killers and Taylor Swift to Daft Punk and Lenny Kravitz.

It's free entry and music from across six decades will fill the bar from 10pm.

Expect some chaos

Devastation will fill The White Hart in Wolvercote on April 28 from 9pm till late.

The Buckinghamshire-based four piece covers band mix up their instrument line-up from gig to gig and have played on both the national and international stage.

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Tom's a match for anyone

NEW on the scene but already picking up rave reviews, Tom Grennan will be performing at the O2 Academy in Oxford later in the year following a sold out March tour.

His debut album, Lighting Matches will be released this July and is set to feature heavily in his biggest tour to date that will see him playing to more than 35,000 people across the UK in clubs and arenas.

Tom will also be playing 14 festivals this summer, performing in front of more than half a million people. An incredible feat for a 22-year-old from Bedford.

The Telegraph have proclaimed Tom to be "a cross between the deep, estuarial soul of Adele and the jaded experience of Wimbledon troubadour Jamie T" while Wonderland Magazine described his talent as "with Paolo Nutini-esque tones, Tom's vocals are hypnotically beautiful and completely enchanting".

Having just released a new single, Sober, which is currently sitting on the Radio 1, Radio 2, Virgin and Absolute daytime playlists, Tom continues to work on Lighting Matches with Grammy award winning producer Fraser T Smith and Dan Grech.

Lighting Matches will also feature his popular single Found What I've Been Looking For, which was used as the title music to Sky Sports' Premier League coverage and has racked up more than 14 million streams.

He will make his appearance at the O2 Academy on October 18. For more information head over to academymusicgroup.com.

Follow the trail and solve the clues

With the weather looking brighter (and hopefully drier), it's a good time to get out and enjoy the fresh air.

So if you're looking for something to do with family and friends or seeking a fun day out with the kids in Oxford then why not explore the city on a self-guided Spy Mission themed Treasure Trail.

As you follow the Trail route, solve the sneaky clues set on existing buildings, permanent features and monuments to crack the code and complete the mission just like a true secret agent.

The Trail starts at Carfax and takes you up Cornmarket Street, down Broad and Holywell Streets and across Magdalen Bridge. You will then enjoy a riverside walk around beautiful Christ Church Meadow to St Aldate's before finishing back at your starting point.

The Oxford City and Meadow Trail is approximately 2.8 miles long and takes two and a half hours to complete and is suitable for ages 6 to 106.

You'll need a trail booklet to help guide you and there's a mobile phone text service offering clue answers should you get stuck.

There are a variety of trails available so you can explore other parts of the county too.

As well as fun and fresh air for the whole family there's also the chance to win £100 with all correct answers going into a monthly prize draw.

For more information and details of how to get a trail booklet go to www.treasuretrails.co.uk

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Out & About

Perfect place for your first Japanese

By Emma Kirwan

I was both excited and apprehensive to be dining at a Japanese restaurant for brunch as it's very different from my usual porridge and honey, but I was quickly immersed in the Shoryu Ramen experience at Westgate.

Staff greeted my friend and I with a warm welcome and a bang on a drum which surprisingly made us feel comfortable. As were shown to our seats it was hard not to enjoy the rustic tables in the centre of the restaurant and how wonderfully bright it is; I almost forgot I was in a shopping centre.

Diving into the menu and eagerly scanning the drinks list I was drawn to the Rainbow Lattes. I was excited about the Red Velvet Latte, a blend of turmeric, cinnamon, ginger and liquorice, but I wasn't wowed by the taste. It was creamy and easy to drink and reminded me of my childhood favourite though - Angel Delight. Meanwhile, my friend opted for the Blu Chai Latte with star anise, cardamom, liquorice, fennel, ginger & pea protein. It was herby and bursting with flavour. A great way to awaken the senses in the morning.

I eased myself in to a Japanese style breakfast by ordering the Halloumi & Avocado Bun (£5.50) to start. The bun was a highlight for me as it was soft, light and spongy. However, the Japanese mayo, which

Halloumi and avocado bun

has a likeness to salad cream, overshadowed the salty halloumi. My friend praised the BBQ Pork Nitamago Bun (£5.50) for its tangy barbecue sauce and succulent meat.

Now, for the main event - the Tonkotsu ramen. Bowls of broth filled with noodles, egg, veg and meat or fish if you fancy it.

After much deliberation (and help from the lovely waitress) I picked the Origin Tonkotsu with medium noodles (£10). The ramen, which takes 12-hours to create, comes with barbecue pork belly, mushrooms and spring onion. The broth was hearty and delightfully salty and the noodles were soft, but not slippery. A gingery punch in the broth also added a bit of pizzazz.

My friend opted for the chicken

Origin Tonkotsu, a mix of pork belly, mushrooms and spring onion

Curry Ramen (£12.90), a much spicier dish. It's a curry-soy pork broth served with chicken karaage, nitamago egg, nori seaweed, menma bamboo shoots, Naruto fish cake, spring onion and ginger. The broth was warming and the spices jumped from the bowl kicking you at the back of the throat - very welcome if you enjoy a bit of heat.

If you're yet to sample Japanese food then Shoryu is a great place to start. Each course was tasty and different and was a great introduction to the cuisine - definitely a must try in Westgate.

Inn the news

New faces at the bar

Traditional 18th century pub, the Cherry Tree in Steventon has new managers with plans to launch a new menu and beer tasting events.

Experienced licensees Richard and Niki Clarke aim to bring the pub back to the heart of the community.

Richard said: "We are really looking forward to welcoming back customers old and new and putting this place at the centre of the village. It's a beautiful building with open fires in the winter, a great courtyard for the summer and seven bedrooms for guests, the place deserves to be a real pub serving the people around it."

Country inn reopens

The Bear & Ragged Staff in Cumnor has reopened after being refurbished by new owners The Peach Pub Company.

The beautiful 16th century country inn has been given a makeover inside and out and a new menu showcases the best of British ingredients in delicious, classic pub dishes.

The pub also boasts nine rooms, redecorated and has exposed Tudor beams and luxurious bathrooms for a quirky stylish experience.

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The value of equity released in the UK last quarter hit record highs – could it help you in your retirement too?

Equity release continues to grow in popularity across the UK, with increasing numbers of over-55 UK homeowners turning to the wealth in their property as a means of providing a significant financial boost. The Equity Release Council have reported a 44pc annual increase in Q3 – amounting to £824 million in cash released – giving some indication of the staggering property wealth available in the UK[1].

If you are in the midst of planning your dream retirement, or you are simply searching for a convenient, secure way of boosting your later life income, then equity release with a lifetime mortgage could be the financial tool you need to reach your goals. With an array of products on the market, there's sure to be a plan that meets your requirements and ambitions.

A Roll-Up Lifetime Mortgage could also be used to help people in later life who still have an existing interest only mortgage with no repayment vehicle, raise a tax free cash lump sum that could pay off the capital. Featuring no required monthly repayments, you simply pay back the loan, plus accrued interest, through the sale of your property after both you and your partner pass away, or you both enter long-term care. You retain full ownership of your property for the duration of your plan, meaning that you could significantly boost your income without the need to downsize. What could you make of your golden years with a significant tax-free increase to your income?

What's more, the popularity of equity release is being driven by a wholesale commitment to customer satisfaction. That's why as well as guaranteeing you remain the sole owner of your property, plans from an Equity Release Council approved provider all feature a no negative equity guarantee: you will never owe more than the value of your home. Subject to the provider's criteria being fulfilled, most plans are also portable, meaning that you are free to move home in the future should you wish. A Lifetime Mortgage may reduce the value of your estate and effect your entitlement to means tested state benefits, but a personalised illustration is available to help you understand the features and risks of any plans you may consider.

With over 80 types of plan available, there's an equity release service to meet your requirements and match your ambitions.

Why not find out today how releasing equity could expand your budget and broaden the horizons of your retirement?

[1] *Equity Release Council, 'New equity release plans rise by a third as lending passes £800 million in a single quarter for the first time', 30/10/17.*

Could equity release help you? For more information call now and speak to Andy Pike at his Oxford Office - 01865 378718

Andy Pike - A True Professional!

TRUSTPILOT ★★★★★

Andy Pike gave us a highly professional, uncomplicated and prompt service. Everything was tied up very quickly and at every stage we were kept fully informed and also given the proper warnings about the risks. Andy was a pleasure to do business with and I cannot recommend him highly enough. - **Mike Sauvage, 22 March 2018.**

ARE YOU A HOMEOWNER OVER 55?

ENJOY RETIREMENT BY USING PART OF THE TAX-FREE WEALTH BUILT UP IN YOUR PROPERTY

Common Uses For Equity Release:

- Helping your loved ones financially with house deposits or tuition fees
- Clearing your mortgage, loans and credit cards
- Home improvements or replacing your car
- Dream holidays & second homes
- Supplementing income & improving lifestyle

How It Works:

- ✓ Release tax-free cash from your home, retaining full home ownership
- ✓ Move home later if needed, subject to lending criteria
- ✓ No required monthly repayments
- ✓ Regulated by Financial Conduct Authority
- ✓ We offer Lifetime Mortgages from whole of market lenders approved by the Equity Release Council

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR A FREE GUIDE CALL ANDY ON: 01865 378 718 | 07854 148 815 OR VISIT www.responsible.org.uk/andypike

This is a Lifetime Mortgage which may impact the value of your estate and could affect your entitlement to means tested state benefits. To understand the features and risks, ask for a personalised illustration. Think carefully before securing other debts against your home. By consolidating your debts into a mortgage you may be required to pay more over the entire term than you would with your existing debt. Responsible Equity Release is a trading style of Responsible Life Limited. Only if your case completes will Responsible Life charge an advice fee, currently not exceeding £1,295.

Out&About Competition

WIN tickets to Hairspray The Musical at The New Theatre

Closing date: Sunday, June 10, 2018

The nicest kids in town are returning to Oxford in 2018 when Hairspray makes a welcome return to the city.

The big, bold and beautiful show comes to the New Theatre Oxford from June 18 – 23, and tickets are on sale now.

Featuring iconic music and lyrics, this much-loved musical comedy stars ITV comedy legend Norman Pace as Wilbur Turnblad, Brenda Edwards as Motormouth Maybelle and Layton Williams as Seaweed. Matt Rixon returns to the role of Edna Turnblad and newcomer Rebecca Mendoza makes her professional debut as Tracy Turnblad.

The show is choreographed by Olivier Award-winning Drew McOnie with direction from Paul Kerryson.

It's Baltimore 1962, where Tracy Turnblad, a big girl with big hair and an even bigger heart, is on a mission to follow her dreams and dance her way onto national TV. Tracy's audition makes her a local star and soon she is using her new-found fame to fight for equality, bagging local heartthrob Link Larkin along the way.

Hairspray is a musical based on the 1988 film of the same name which starred Divine and Ricki Lake by cult filmmaker John Waters. With music and lyrics by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman and book by Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan, Hairspray originally opened to rave reviews on Broadway in 2002 and subsequently won eight Tony Awards.

The production opened in London at the Shaftesbury Theatre in 2007 and won four Olivier Awards including Best New Musical. Proving to be an international success, Hairspray has also opened in South Africa, Japan, South Korea, China and Dubai.

Following the musical's phenomenal success on stage, a film of the musical was released in 2007 which starred John Travolta, Michelle Pfeiffer and James Marsden.

Tickets can be purchased from the New Theatre box office on George Street, by ringing 0844 871 3020 or by visiting our website at www.atgtickets.com/oxford (phone and internet bookings subject to booking/transaction fee. Calls are charged at 7p per minute, plus your phone company's access charge.).

Win Tickets!

We have 5 pairs of tickets up for grabs to the June 18 show and to be in with a chance of winning all you have to do is answer the following simple question:

Q: What year was the film of the musical version of Hairspray released?

To enter this competition and more like it, go online to
www.oxfordshireguardian.co.uk
For full terms & conditions go to www.oxfordshireguardian.co.uk/about-us

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darren@newdrivewaycompany.com

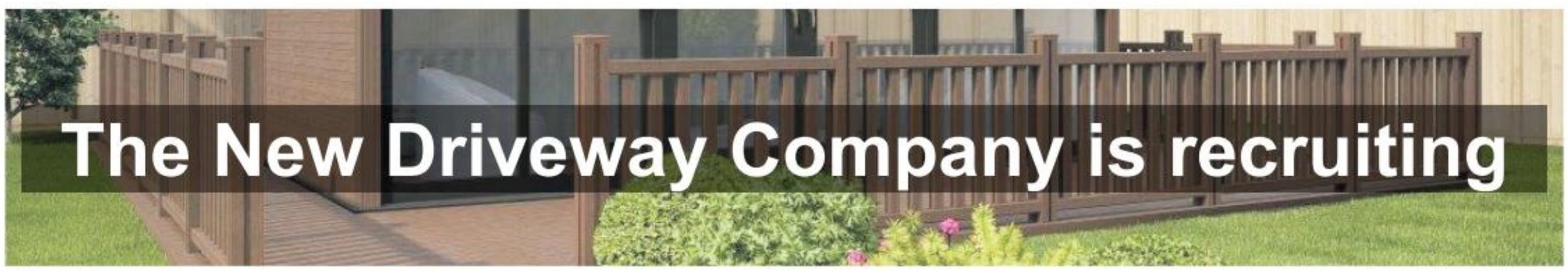
New Driveway Company announces massive recruitment drive after huge growth surge following on from the Brexit announcement!

Since doubling in size over the past 12 months, opening 3 new offices (Cardiff, Guildford & Coventry) & investing in a skills academy which goes live in 2019; we URGENTLY require local tradespeople in & around Newbury, Reading & Oxford.

We need TOP PEOPLE to keep up the pace with our ongoing growth in 2018; do you have what it takes to be part of our team?

We're looking for:-

- Apprentices & Trainees – must be 18+ looking for a career in our trade
- Experienced Digger Drivers & Ground Workers
- Experienced Driveway Installers with a knowledge in all or some of the following – Block Drives, Resin Drives, Tarmac Drives & Gravel Drives
- Experienced & Reliable Tradespeople looking for a long term career with a company which will nurture & develop their skills further



The New Driveway Company is recruiting

puzzle drome — Your weekly puzzle challenge

CROSS CODE

14	10	2	13	11	22	14	22	■	21	6	17	14
6	■	■	6	■	25	■	14	■	9	■	■	20
25	■	14	15	16	6	26	13	1	15	12	■	18
13	14	20	15	■	21	■	24	■	16	11	1	13
■	■	8	■	15	6	24	14	22	■	2	■	11
2	12	11	16	11	■	1	■	25	14	14	22	15
13	■	7	■	25	1	22	4	14	■	23	■	14
14	20	6	18	16	■	14	■	15	2	9	14	22
6	■	26	■	15	12	11	19	15	■	13	■	■
15	1	13	11	■	6	■	12	■	1	13	1	6
1	■	14	21	14	25	4	14	20	18	7	■	5
20	■	■	1	■	14	■	6	■	3	■	■	9
4	11	6	16	■	21	6	13	6	7	15	1	6

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 E	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 M	22 D	23	24	25	26

Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

MAGIC SQUARE

NO TO LONESOME PLOT

Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.

Quiz Challenge

1. Which Cambodian revolutionary, who led the Khmer Rouge, was born Saloth Sar?
2. Brunel's Royal Albert Bridge connects Plymouth to which Cornish town?
3. Depicted wearing a domino mask and green clothing, which Batman villain was played by Jim Carrey in Batman Forever?
4. In 1929, J.M. Barrie gave the Peter Pan copyright to which famous children's hospital in Bloomsbury, London?
5. Found between the Shetland Islands and Norway, name the only Shipping Forecast area to begin with a letter V.
6. The 1991 Ryder Cup match known as 'The War on the Shore' was played at which golf course?
7. In 2000, Britt Robertson made her TV debut as the younger version of the title character in an episode of which series?
8. The former Bankside Power Station is now the site for which London art gallery?
9. Which fruit would you find in the centre of a Sussex pond pudding?
10. The musical Smike is based on which novel by Charles Dickens?

NONAGRAM

F	I	N
E	T	C
D	O	N

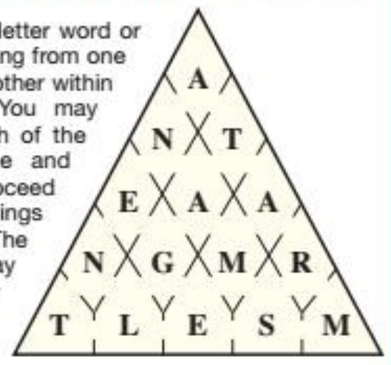
How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:
28 Good; 33 Very Good; 39 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

WORD PYRAMID

Spell out a 15-letter word or phrase by moving from one chamber to another within the pyramid. You may only enter each of the chambers once and may only proceed through openings in the walls. The first letter may appear in any chamber.

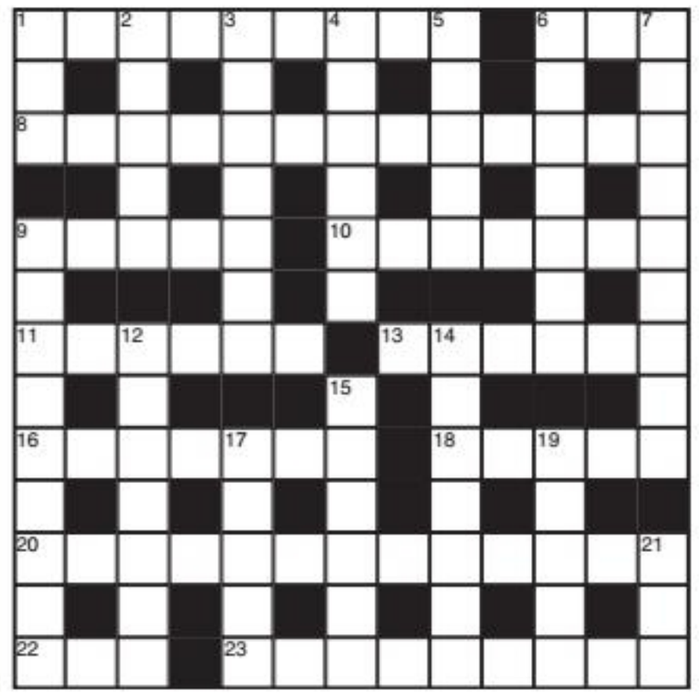


FIVE ALIVE

OK	IB	EL	TA	SH
AN	■	VI	■	OE
SO	FT	EF	AE	LR
WI	■	TR	■	VT
NS	TE	SY	TL	ES

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid – but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Valid reason for charity (4,5)
6. Kind of jet fuel (3)
8. Attractive point can help travellers get their bearings (8,5)
9. Approach the preliminary period (3-2)
10. Valuable stone island (7)
11. You may be seeing double with such stars in your eyes (6)
13. Also like spring (2,4)
16. Thin wrapping sheets can frustrate (7)
18. Gave medicine, does upset Deirdre to start with (5)
20. Rusty, having been struck off (3,2,8)
22. Desired to include a gentleman (3)
23. Reorder back boiler (9)

DOWN

1. Stone cut 11 Across in half (3)
2. Vital part of the church equipment (5)
3. Lower prices (7)
4. Joined a team in Manchester perhaps (6)
5. Dan left Adrienne in chaos for him (5)
6. Sack in French station contains the rubbish (7)
7. She'd clued differently as arranged (9)
9. This rogue could be virtuous (9)
12. Clergyman, one leaving church (7)
14. A cider's fermented in this compartment (7)
15. She is a girl maybe with hidden love (6)
17. Tender bid (5)
19. Descendant is male, about 101 (5)
21. It's a part of the weekend supplement (3)

SUDOKU

Easy

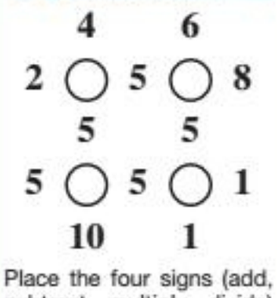
Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box.

Hard

	2		4	9				
9					6		1	8
1	6	3		2				
						4	5	7
		5			8	3		
3	7			1	5		9	
6					4	5		9
	5	2		8				6
		9			3	1	2	

7	2				3	6		
					4			
								2
						4		6
9				7				5
5	1		2			7		
	3			9				
2		9	6				5	
			7	1				9

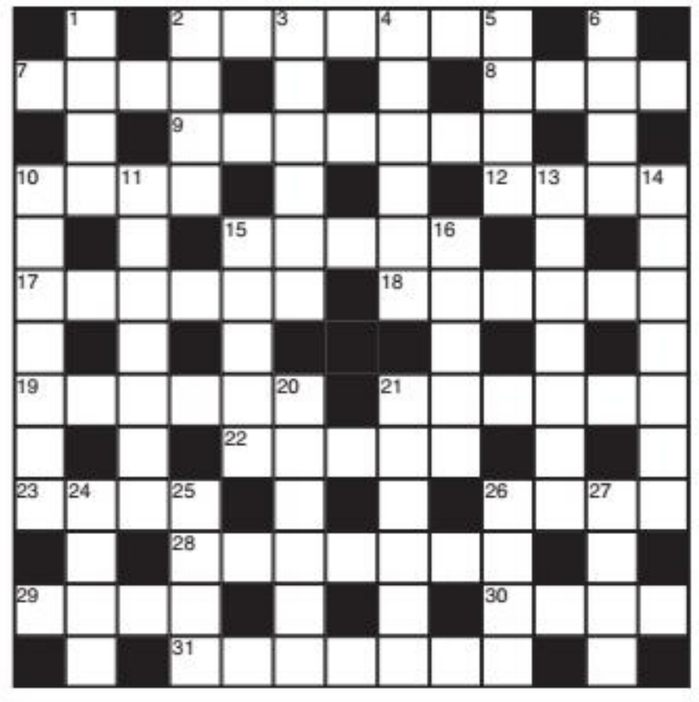
EQUALISER



Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same.

Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

2. Largest ocean (7)
7. Huge (inf.) (4)
8. Single item (4)
9. Regain health (7)
10. Chessman (4)
12. Stupid person (4)
15. Thick, sweet liquid (5)
17. Mould, pattern (6)
18. Clergyman (6)
19. Empty space (6)
21. Diving bird (6)
22. Appear suddenly (3,2)
23. Arum (4)
26. Remain (4)
28. Large building (7)
29. Summon (4)
30. Social class (4)
31. Beneficiary (7)

DOWN

1. Greek philosopher (4)
2. Recreational area (4)
3. Spinal bone (6)
4. Partiality (6)
5. Cheese part of milk (4)
6. Tablet (4)
10. Transference (7)
11. Relating to sight (7)
13. Without a chance (3,2,2)
14. Despotism (7)
15. Become alert (3,2)
16. Invigorate (3,2)
20. Feeling depressed (6)
21. Pedant (6)
24. ---- the Terrible (4)
25. Howl (4)
26. Withered (4)
27. Female relative (4)

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SOLUTIONS

QUIZ CHALLENGE: 1 Pol Pot; 2 Saltash; 3 Riddler; 4 Great Ormond Street; 5 Viking; 6 Kiawah Island; 7 Sheena; 8 Tate Modern; 9 Lemon; 10 Nicholas Nickleby.

CROSS CODE

1 I	2 P	3	4 K	5 G	6 Q	7 A	8 Y	9 J	10 X	11 O	12 H	13 L	14 E	15 S	16 T	17 Z	18 C	19 W	20 N	21 M	22 D	23 F	24 V	25 R	26 B

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD:

Across – 1 Good cause; 6 Gas; 8 Magnetic north; 9 Run-up; 10 Emerald; 11 Gemini; 13 As well; 16 Tinfoil; 18 Dosed; 20 Out of practice; 22 Sir; 23 Rearrange.

Down – 1 Gem; 2 Organ; 3 Cheapen; 4 United; 5 Emile; 6 Garbage; 7 Scheduled; 9 Righteous; 12 Minster; 14 Sidecar; 15 Gloria; 17 Offer; 19 Scion; 21 Eke.

QUICK CROSSWORD:

Across – 2 Pacific; 7 Mega; 8 Unit; 9 Recover; 10 Rook; 12 Dolt; 15 Syrup; 17 Matrix; 18 Rector; 19 Vacuum; 21 Puffin; 22 Pop up; 23 Lily; 26 Stay; 28 Edifice; 29 Call; 30 Rank; 31 Legatee.

Down – 1 Zeno; 2 Park; 3 Coccyx; 4 Favour; 5 Curd; 6 Pill; 10 Removal; 11 Optical; 13 Out of it; 14 Tyranny; 15 Sit up; 16 Prep up; 20 Moping; 21 Purist; 24 Ivan; 25 Yell; 26 Sere; 27 Aunt.

MAGIC SQUARE:

T	O	N	E
S	O	M	E
L	O	N	G
P	L	O	T

NONAGRAM:
cant; cento; cite; cited; CONFIDENT; contii; conte; contend; cote; ctenoid; deft; dent; deontic; dicot; diet; dint; docent; doit; dote; edict; edit; feint; feitd; font; ident; indent; nife; noetic; into; intone; intoned; nife; noetic; nonet; note; noted; notice; noticed; otten; ontic; otic; tein; tend; tendon; tenon; tide; ted; tine; tined; tinned; toed; tone; toned; tonic; tonne.

FIVE ALIVE:
(1) Across – Obeah; Steal; Style. **Down** – Oasis; Every; Helve.
(2) Across – Kilts; Offer; Nests. **Down** – Known; Lifts; Sorts.

EASY SUDOKU

5	2	8	4	9	1	6	7	3
9	4	7	3	5	6	2	1	8
1	6	3	8	2	7	9	4	5
8	1	6	9	3	2	4	5	7
2	9	5	7	4	8	3	6	1
3	7	4	6	1	5	8	9	2
6	3	1	2	7	4	5	8	9
4	5	2	1	8	9	7	3	6
7	8	9	5	6	3	1	2	4

HARD SUDOKU

7	2	1	9	5	3	6	8	4
6	9	3	8	2	4	5	7	1
4	8	5	1	6	7	9	3	2
3	7	2	5	8	9	4	1	6
9	6	4	3	7	1	8	2	5
5	1	8	2	4	6	7	9	3
1	3	7	4	9	5	2	6	8
2	4	9	6	3	8	1	5	7
8	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	9

MAGIC SQUARE: Clockwise from top left – multiply; subtract; add; divide. Total: 2.

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A TENDER THING

Love entangled with the end of love

Ben Power's unique and moving play imagines the star-crossed lovers at the end of their long lives together. Shakespeare's original words are woven together into a new, deeply romantic story of loyalty, loss and enduring love.

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Thurs 10th May *(Schools Performance)*, 10:30am

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Friday April 13th

TOP TV

BBC 1

9.30pm Have I Got News for You

BBC 2

10.00pm Episodes

ITV

8.00pm Love Your Garden

Channel 4

10.35pm 8 Out of 10 Cats

Channel 5

7.00pm The Gadget Show

MORNING

9.15am Commonwealth Games 2018

9.15am Oxford Street Revealed
10.00am Homes Under the Hammer
11.00am Britain's Home Truths
11.45am Dom on the Spot

8.30am Lorraine
9.25am The Jeremy Kyle Show
10.30am This Morning

7.10am 3rd Rock from the Sun
7.35am Everybody Loves Raymond
8.30am Frasier
10.05am Ramsay's Hotel Hell
11.00am Undercover Boss USA

8.20am Floogals
8.35am Digby Dragon
8.55am Rusty Rivets
9.05am Mofy
9.15am The Wright Stuff
11.15am Can't Pay? We'll Take it Away!

AFTERNOON

1.00pm BBC News at One
1.30pm Regional News and Weather
1.45pm Doctors
2.15pm 800 Words
3.00pm Escape to the Country
3.45pm Money for Nothing
4.30pm Flog It!
5.15pm Pointless

12.15pm Bargain Hunt
1.00pm Commonwealth Games 2018
5.15pm Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

12.30pm Loose Women
1.30pm ITV Lunchtime News
1.55pm ITV News London
2.00pm ITV Racing
5.00pm The Chase

12.00pm Channel 4 News
12.05pm Come Dine with Me
1.05pm Posh Pawnbrokers
2.10pm Countdown
3.00pm A Place in the Sun
4.00pm Escape to the Chateau: DIY
5.00pm Four in a Bed
5.30pm Star Boot Sale

12.10pm 5 News Lunchtime
12.15pm GPs: Behind Closed Doors
1.15pm Home and Away
1.45pm Neighbours
2.20pm NCIS Special: Game of Shadows
3.20pm Patient Killer
5.00pm 5 News at 5
5.30pm Neighbours

EVENING

6.00pm BBC News at Six
6.30pm Regional News and Weather
7.00pm The One Show
7.30pm Sounds Like Friday Night
8.00pm EastEnders
8.30pm MasterChef
9.30pm Have I Got News for You
10.00pm BBC News at Ten
10.25pm Regional News and Weather
10.35pm The Graham Norton Show
11.25pm Wannabe
11.50pm Commonwealth Games 2018
3.30am Commonwealth Games 2018
6.00am Breakfast

6.00pm Eggheads
6.30pm Today at the Games
8.00pm Gardeners' World
9.00pm The City and the City
10.00pm Episodes
10.30pm Newsnight
11.05pm Front Row Late
11.35pm The Assassination of Gianni Versace - American Crime Story
12.30am Panorama
1.00am Civilisations
2.00am Picasso's Last Stand
3.00am The Assassination of Gianni Versace - American Crime Story

6.00pm ITV News London
6.30pm ITV Evening News
7.00pm Emmerdale
7.30pm Coronation Street
8.00pm Love Your Garden
8.30pm Coronation Street
9.00pm Lethal Weapon
10.00pm ITV News at Ten and Weather
10.30pm ITV News London
10.45pm Invictus
1.15am Jackpot247
3.00am Take on the Twisters
3.50am ITV Nightscreen
6.00am Sooty

6.00pm The Simpsons
6.30pm Hollyoaks
7.00pm Channel 4 News
8.00pm I Don't Like Mondays
9.00pm Gogglebox
10.00pm Lee and Dean
10.35pm 8 Out of 10 Cats
11.20pm Rob Beckett's Playing for Time
11.50pm Rude Tube
12.50am Oldboy
2.35am Kiss Me First
3.30am Building the Dream
4.25am The Question Jury

6.00pm Home and Away
6.30pm 5 News Tonight
7.00pm The Gadget Show
8.00pm Springtime on the Farm
9.00pm Jane Mcdonald: My Life Story
10.00pm Will and Grace
10.30pm Will and Grace
11.05pm Greatest Celebrity Wind-Ups Ever!
12.00am Super Casino
3.10am GPs: Behind Closed Doors
4.00am The Great Yorkshire Bridge
4.45am House Doctor
5.10am Divine Designs

Saturday April 14th

BBC 1

TOP TV

9.30pm Mrs. Brown's Boys

MORNING

10.00am Saturday Kitchen Live
11.30am Classic Mary Berry

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Football Focus
1.00pm BBC News
1.15pm Commonwealth Games 2018
4.30pm Final Score
5.30pm A Question of Sport

EVENING

6.00pm Doodlebugs
6.15pm Ready or Not
6.45pm BBC News
6.55pm Regional News and Weather
7.05pm Pointless
7.55pm Who Dares Wins
8.35pm Casualty
9.30pm Mrs. Brown's Boys
10.00pm BBC News
10.20pm Match of the Day
11.45pm Commonwealth Games 2018
3.30am Commonwealth Games 2018
6.00am Breakfast

BBC 2

8.30pm Dad's Army

10.00am Commonwealth Games 2018

12.00pm Commonwealth Games 2018
1.15pm MasterChef
2.15pm MasterChef
3.15pm Escape to the Continent
4.15pm Money for Nothing
4.45pm Flog It!
5.30pm Living with the Brainy Bunch

6.30pm Today at the Games
8.00pm The Forest
8.30pm Dad's Army
9.00pm Gettys: The World's Richest Art Dynasty
10.15pm Commonwealth Games 2018
11.45pm Swingers
1.15am Civilisations
2.15am Weather for the Week Ahead
2.20am BBC News
6.00am Commonwealth Games 2018

ITV

6.30pm Ninja Warrior UK

8.00am Thunderbirds are Go
8.25am ITV News
8.30am Zoe Ball on Saturday
9.25am Saturday Morning with James Martin
11.25am Who's Doing the Dishes?

12.20pm ITV Lunchtime News
12.25pm Change Your Tune
1.30pm Britain's Brightest Family
2.00pm ITV Racing
4.35pm ITV Racing

6.15pm ITV Evening News
6.25pm ITV News London
6.30pm Ninja Warrior UK
7.30pm Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule
8.00pm Britain's Got Talent
9.25pm The Keith and Paddy Picture Show
9.55pm ITV News
10.15pm Legally Blonde
12.05am Marcella
12.55am Jackpot247
3.00am Babushka
3.50am ITV Nightscreen
6.00am Sooty

Channel 4

5.35pm The Secret Life of the Zoo

7.10am King of Queens
8.00am Everybody Loves Raymond
9.00am Frasier
10.30am The Big Bang Theory
11.00am The Big Bang Theory
11.30am The Big Bang Theory

12.00pm The Simpsons
12.30pm The Simpsons
1.00pm Formula 1
2.30pm Car S.O.S
3.30pm The Restoration Man
4.30pm A Place in the Sun
5.35pm The Secret Life of the Zoo
6.30pm Channel 4 News
7.00pm Coastal Railways with Julie Walters
8.00pm Britain's Most Historic Towns

9.00pm Thor
11.15pm Big Game
12.55am Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA
1.45am Hollyoaks Omnibus
3.55am Building the Dream
4.50am The Question Jury
5.45am Steph and Dom's One Star to Five Star
6.15am King of Queens
6.40am King of Queens

Channel 5

7.00pm The Secret Life of Owls

9.10am Shimmer and Shine
9.30am Digby Dragon
9.45am Peppa Pig
9.55am Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
10.30am The Gadget Show
11.30am Traffic Cops

12.30pm Traffic Cops
1.30pm Traffic Cops
2.30pm Live Premiership Rugby
5.00pm Can't Pay? We'll Take it Away!

6.00pm Can't Pay? We'll Take it Away!
7.00pm The Secret Life of Owls
8.00pm The Qe2: The World's Greatest Cruise Ship
8.55pm 5 News Weekend
9.00pm Football on 5
10.00pm Football on 5
10.30pm 20 Moments That Rocked the 00s
12.00am Super Casino
3.10am Murder on the Internet
4.00am The Murderer Next Door
4.45am House Doctor
5.10am Divine Designs

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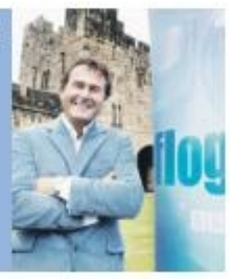
TOP TV

BBC 1

8.00pm Antiques Roadshow

BBC 2

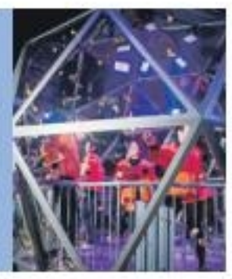


5.30pm Flog It!

ITV

8.00pm The Durrells

Channel 4



8.00pm The Crystal Maze

Channel 5

7.00pm The Royals.

MORNING

7.30am Match of the Day
9.00am The Andrew Marr Show
10.00am The Big Questions
11.00am Homes Under the Hammer

9.15am Commonwealth Games 2018

8.00am The Haunted Hathaways
8.25am ITV News
8.30am Zoe Ball on Sunday
9.25am Love Your Garden
10.00am Peston on Sunday
11.00am Britain's Got Talent

7.05am Everybody Loves Raymond
7.30am Everybody Loves Raymond
7.55am Everybody Loves Raymond
8.25am Eat the Week with Iceland
9.30am Sunday Brunch

9.45am Peppa Pig
9.55am Peppa Pig
10.00am Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
10.35am Football on 5
11.20am Football on 5
11.50am FIA Formula E Highlights

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Bargain Hunt
1.00pm BBC News
1.15pm MasterChef
2.15pm MasterChef
3.15pm Escape to the Country
4.00pm Lifeline
4.10pm Songs of Praise
4.45pm Pointless
5.35pm BBC News
5.50pm Regional News and Weather

3.00pm Football
5.30pm Flog It!

12.20pm Britain's Got More Talent
1.20pm ITV Lunchtime News
1.30pm Ninja Warrior UK
2.30pm You've Been Framed!
3.00pm Tipping Point
4.00pm Change Your Tune
5.00pm The Chase: Celebrity Special

12.30pm The Simpsons
1.00pm The Simpsons
1.30pm The Simpsons
2.00pm Formula 1
4.30pm Speed with Guy Martin
5.30pm Grand Designs

1.45pm Traffic Cops
2.45pm A Royal Night Out
3.45pm 5 News
3.50pm A Royal Night Out
4.40pm The Hundred-Foot Journey
5.40pm 5 News
5.45pm The Hundred-Foot Journey
6.55pm 5 News Weekend
7.00pm Royal Babies: The Crown and the Crib

EVENING

6.00pm The Big Painting Challenge
7.00pm Countryfile
8.00pm Antiques Roadshow
9.00pm Ordeal by Innocence
10.00pm BBC News
10.20pm Regional News and Weather
10.30pm Match of the Day 2
11.30pm The Peacemaker
1.25am Weather for the Week Ahead
1.30am BBC News
6.00am Breakfast

6.30pm Today at the Games
8.00pm Britain's Biggest Warship: Crewing Up
9.00pm My Year with the Tribe
10.00pm Famalam
10.20pm The Homesman
12.15am The Hunters
2.05am Question Time
3.05am Holby City
4.05am This is BBC Two
6.00am Flog it! Trade Secrets
6.30am Escape to the Country

6.00pm Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule
6.30pm ITV Evening News
6.45pm ITV News London
7.00pm Celebrity Catchphrase
8.00pm The Durrells
9.00pm The Good Karma Hospital
10.00pm ITV News
10.20pm Peston on Sunday
11.15pm This Time Next Year
12.10am Jackpot247
3.00am Take on the Twisters
3.50am ITV Nightscreen
5.05am The Jeremy Kyle Show
6.00am Good Morning Britain

6.30pm Channel 4 News
7.00pm Escape to the Chateau
8.00pm The Crystal Maze
9.00pm Homeland
10.05pm Lifeline
11.00pm 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown
12.05am Out of the Furnace
2.10am Hotel Salvation
3.50am KOTV Boxing Weekly
4.20am Gillette World Sport
4.45am The Question Jury
5.40am Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free
6.00am Countdown

8.00pm Meghan Markle: The First 100 Days
9.00pm Harry and Meghan: In Their Own Words
10.00pm The Dater's Handbook
11.45pm Kensington Palace: Fit for a Princess
1.15am Super Casino
3.10am Secrets of Great British Castles
4.00am My Mum's Hotter Than Me!
4.45am House Doctor
5.10am Divine Designs
5.35am Wildlife SOS
6.00am Peppa Pig

Advertorial

Think before you let your cat have kittens

When I take a cat to be neutered, I sometimes wonder what it is that makes difficulties for the general public to get their own cats neutered.

Of course, there are those people who get caught out when their kitten falls pregnant at four months (yes, I said four months).

When you buy, are given, or take in a kitten the chances are it is un-neutered. So why not start a KITTY fund, while the kitten is small, by putting money aside each week to help pay for ongoing costs.

For those of you who are having financial difficulties there may be help in the form of vouchers from the RSPCA, The Blue Cross, and the PDSA, but you are still expected to have a kitty fund to help out.

Although I have mentioned female kittens, the males need neutering too. This is cheaper as the operation is easier but it is just as important. Once the males start roaming after females (and they can travel an eight 8-mile radius risking getting run over in the process), they will get into fights, cause damage to other peoples' cats, and pass on diseases to both males and females. And they will make your house stink with their male smell, ugh!

With this in mind, when someone offers you a kitten they no longer want, do you think hard about the financial side? We at Sunshine Cat Rescue discuss with our clients the costs to them of taking on a kitten. These are as follows:

Initially the kitten will need two vaccinations two to three weeks apart and a booster every year (these are very important to keep your cat in good health). Then there are regular flea and worming treatments, weekly food bills, the equipment needed - bed, scratch-post, toys etc. And of course the neutering - in total around £150.

Finally, there are the vets' bills if by some chance the kitten you have taken on has not been wormed or flea'd or turns out to have a disease. At least if it comes from a rescue or registered breeder, it should already have been checked by a vet.

All rescues are over run at this time of year, due to the consequences of un-neutered cats - it really is time to take stock. When the rescues take in all these kittens they then have no room for the real needy cases, strays, or for cats that need rehoming and so it has a knock-on effect.

SO please think before you let your cat have kittens. One un-neutered cat will produce 20,000 descendants in 5 years. Pretty scary wouldn't you say?

Advertorial

Sir Ben Kingsley Takes A Seat

Situated at the heart of the Cotswolds, where three counties and four regions meet, The Theatre Chipping Norton is a mixed arts venue, hosting, co-producing and supporting some of the most exciting, accessible and entertaining culture in the region… When Sir Ben Kingsley was asked the reason for his involvement (in this year's seating campaign), he stated:

"because The Theatre and Cinema of Chipping Norton is not only a cultural centre but a shared delight that binds the community together and of which we are proud."

Sir Ben Kingsley, March 2018

The campaign is off to a great start with support coming in from a number of Trusts including The Foyle Foundation and West Oxford District Council, in addition to local celebrities Sir Patrick Stewart, Sir Ben Kingsley, Toby Jones, Alexander Armstrong and Greg Hicks. With 90 seats already sponsored, including several made by our generous Theatre FRIENDS, The Theatre are over halfway to their funding target and confident work will begin in mid July.

With many thousands of pounds still to raise, they aren't there yet, so please spread the word and help to get the whole county behind this long overdue refurbishment, in one of the best traditions of Chipping Norton.

Monday April 16th

BBC 1

TOP TV

9.00pm DIY SOS the Big Build

MORNING

9.15am Health
10.00am Homes Under the Hammer
11.00am Heir Hunters
11.45am Dom on the Spot

AFTERNOON

12.15pm Bargain Hunt
1.00pm BBC News at One
1.30pm Regional News and Weather
1.45pm Doctors
2.15pm 800 Words
3.00pm Escape to the Country
3.45pm Flipping Profit
4.30pm Flog It!
5.15pm Pointless

EVENING

6.00pm BBC News at Six
6.30pm Regional News and Weather
7.00pm The One Show
7.30pm Nightmare Pets SOS
8.00pm EastEnders
8.30pm Panorama
9.00pm DIY SOS the Big Build
10.00pm BBC News at Ten
10.30pm Regional News and Weather
10.45pm Have I Got a Bit More News for You
11.30pm The Graham Norton Show
12.15am Weather for the Week Ahead
12.20am BBC News

BBC 2

TOP TV

8.00pm Only Connect

MORNING

7.15am Flog It!
8.00am Hugh's Wild West
9.00am Victoria Derbyshire
11.00am BBC Newsroom Live

AFTERNOON

12.00pm The Daily Politics
1.00pm Perfection
1.45pm Home Away From Home
2.30pm Going Back Giving Back
3.15pm Trust Me, I'm a Doctor
4.15pm Tigers About the House
5.15pm Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

EVENING

6.00pm Eggheads
6.30pm Britain in Bloom
7.00pm The Secret Helpers
8.00pm Only Connect
8.30pm University Challenge
9.00pm Secret Agent Selection: WW2
10.00pm QI
10.30pm Newsnight
11.15pm Gettys: The World's Richest Art Dynasty
12.30am Countryfile
1.25am Attenborough's Wonder of Eggs
2.25am Murder, Mystery and My Family
3.10am This is BBC Two

ITV

TOP TV

2.00pm Judge Rinder

MORNING

8.30am Lorraine
9.25am The Jeremy Kyle Show
10.30am This Morning

AFTERNOON

12.30pm Loose Women
1.30pm ITV Lunchtime News
1.55pm ITV News London
2.00pm Judge Rinder
3.00pm Tenable
4.00pm Tipping Point
5.00pm The Chase

EVENING

6.00pm ITV News London
6.30pm ITV Evening News
7.00pm Emmerdale
7.30pm Coronation Street
8.00pm Give it a Year
8.30pm Coronation Street
9.00pm The Queen's Green Planet
10.00pm ITV News at Ten and Weather
10.30pm ITV News London
10.50pm The Investigator: A British Crime Story
11.50pm Last Laugh in Vegas
12.40am Jackpot247
3.00am The Jeremy Kyle Show

Channel 4

TOP TV

9.00pm The Island with Bear Grylls

MORNING

7.10am 3rd Rock from the Sun
7.35am Everybody Loves Raymond
8.30am Frasier
10.05am Ramsay's Hotel Hell
11.00am Undercover Boss USA

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Channel 4 News
12.05pm Come Dine with Me
1.05pm Posh Pawnbrokers
2.10pm Countdown
3.00pm A Place in the Sun
4.00pm Escape to the Chateau: DIY
5.00pm Four in a Bed
5.30pm Buy it Now

EVENING

6.00pm The Simpsons
6.30pm Hollyoaks
7.00pm Channel 4 News
8.00pm Dispatches
8.30pm Travel Man
9.00pm The Island with Bear Grylls
10.00pm Kiss Me First
11.00pm Indian Summer School
12.05am First Dates
1.00am Lee and Dean
1.30am My Online Nightmare
2.25am I Don't Like Mondays
3.20am Hidden Restaurants with Michel Roux Jr

Channel 5

TOP TV

8.00pm Police Interceptors

MORNING

8.20am Floogals
8.35am Digby Dragon
8.55am Rusty Rivets
9.05am Mofy
9.15am The Wright Stuff
11.15am Traffic Cops

AFTERNOON

12.10pm 5 News Lunchtime
12.15pm The Gadget Show
1.15pm Home and Away
1.45pm Neighbours
2.20pm NCIS
3.20pm To be Announced
5.00pm 5 News at 5
5.30pm Neighbours

EVENING

6.00pm Home and Away
6.30pm 5 News Tonight
7.00pm The Yorkshire Vet Casebook
8.00pm Police Interceptors
9.00pm Paddington Station 24/7
10.00pm Waco Inferno: The Untold Story
11.05pm Criminals Caught on Camera
12.05am America's Toughest Prisons
1.00am Super Casino
3.10am Restless Legs Syndrome: Can't Stop Twitching
4.00am My Mum's Hotter Than Me!
4.45am House Doctor
5.10am Divine Designs

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The survey confirms what some Audiologists have suspected for some time, that hearing aids are not only good for correcting hearing loss but in fact contribute to better and more active lives, better quality of life, and better overall health.

For the hearing impaired workers who wear a hearing aid it is reported that their hearing aids are useful for their job and that the hearing aids also increase the chance of them getting promoted, being in the right job and getting more salary compared to those hearing impaired people who have not obtained hearing aids.

The full report can be found at EuroTrak UK 2015 – ehima

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Why do Oxford house sales fall through?

Bill Cooper, co-author of The Oxford Property Blog and managing director of Martin and Co, Oxford

Selling a house is easy right? The process is well known, proven and routine. In fact, 2,844 Oxford homes were sold over the last 12 months. So what's the problem?

Well according to recent research, 38.8% of property sales fell through – the highest proportion for over 10 years. For Oxford, that suggests that 1,803 house sale transactions failed to complete, contributing to the 13% year on year reduction in the total number of Oxford homes sold.

What is the reason for so many house sales failing?

The most significant reason is Buyers changing their mind or Oxford Sellers 'pulling the plug' because the process is too slow. Combined these account for 46% of house sale failures. A good estate agent will properly determine buyers commitment, financial viability and requirements. A good agent will probe and challenge to enable them to accurately match each buyer with the properties they have available. Equally, a good estate agent will devote time and effort each week to sales progression, ensuring that delays are minimised, but ensuring that all parties are kept fully informed of progress.

It may be that we are starting to see the weakness of the low-cost, up-front fee model favoured by online agents. Once their fee is secured, such agents have no incentive to properly register buyers nor in devoting expensive time and effort to sales progression. Ultimately, buyers get what they pay for, and with close to half of all sales fall-throughs caused by these reasons, it seems clear that agents MUST devote more time to ensuring they have proceedable buyers and that the sales progresses effectively.

The second biggest cause of Oxford house sales failing to complete is either the buyer or seller wishing to renegotiate the price agreed. With a transaction as significant as a house purchase, it is inevitable that the buyer will want to pay the least possible and the seller will want to achieve the best possible price. The estate agent has a role to play here too. Both parties need to be properly informed of the market price that closely comparable properties have achieved, and when a buyer makes an offer, a good estate agent will be able to advise their client on whether the offer represents fair value in the context of the local market.

Over one in ten house sales fall-through because the house survey identifies one or more adverse findings. For example, many homes in and around central Oxford have a heightened flood risk. As a rule of thumb, the factors identified when the seller moved-in, will again be identified by the buyers' advisors. The more that can be proactively divulged the better to ensure that they will not result in the buyer withdrawing. Better to know early than after 8 weeks of sales progression.

So far, so familiar. However, c12% of Oxford house sale fall throughs are a direct result of the tougher lending criteria imposed by legislation in the post-credit crunch world in which we live. This is another area where a good estate agent will advise a buyer, helping them to understand the size of deposit and the likely income required to secure and support their mortgage. The best agents have relationships with a range of specialists who can advise buyer in light of the new rules and regulations.

The final top reason for Oxford house sales to fall-through is the property purchase chain collapsing. When a buyer has a property to sell, and the seller has offered on a property to move to, each part of the chain is reliant on the other parts. Fewer Oxford homes are being advertised for sale, and that creates shortages of properties for buyer and sellers to move to. Good estate agents understand the importance of building a relationship with the other agents in the chain to work together to hold a chain together benefitting all their clients.

Oxford house sellers should think carefully when selecting their preferred agent, evaluating their ability to assist with all aspects of the sales process ensuring that their sale is not one of the c40% that fail to complete. Like moves things in life, you get what you pay for!

What a rise in interest rates may mean for homeowners in Oxfordshire

There's certainly never a dull moment in the housing market and in recent years we've had many changes linked both directly to the property sector and to the economy more widely. One thing that hasn't changed all that much, however, is the Bank of England's base rate which directly impacts mortgage interest rates.

That was until last November when the first increase in a decade was announced taking the base rate to 0.5%. Since then, the Bank of England hasn't made further increases although at least one, if not two, further increases are hotly anticipated to be announced by the Monetary Policy Committee this year – possibly as soon as their next announcement on May 10th.

So, what would a rise, probably of a further quarter per cent, mean for homeowners with loan liabilities?

Reassuringly, it doesn't need to mean doom and gloom!

Indeed, an increasing interest rate demonstrates both the recovery of the housing market and the economy and with the start of the financial downturn now ten years ago, it's about time the market regained its mojo!

Seeing the base rate start to climb may ring panic bells but it really needn't. An increase up to 0.75% is, in all reality, a small increase and going up gradually and in a consistent manner, simple indicates that any shakiness or instability in the market is disappearing – that can't be a bad thing!

But what is the reality here in Oxfordshire?

Well, of the 287,000 households across the county, 66.1% are occupied by the owners, half of whom are lucky enough not to require a mortgage. For those who do have a mortgage, the total outstanding balance (as of June last year) stands at £141.6bn, equating to around £150,000 per household – slightly above the national average of £117,000.

So yes, those people could be affected by a rate increase, but it'll depend on the type of mortgage they hold.

Those on a standard variable rate (SVR) or tracker mortgage will notice a change in interest rates first, while those on a fixed rate won't notice any immediate change. The average Oxfordshire house costs £407,900, so those on a 60% mortgage could expect to pay around £408 more annually on their mortgage if our predicted rate comes into effect. But, given that SVR and tracker mortgages have enjoyed historically low interest rates in recent years, many sensible borrowers will be prepared for slightly bigger monthly payments.

However, it's not simply a case of rates going up. The number of first time buyers entering the market is at its highest since the financial crisis. However, at the same time, overall transactions are still down 17.1% in Oxfordshire compared to the pre-2008 average.

What this combination means is that banks are still keen to capture 'clients for life' in first time buyers, whilst securing as many clients as possible from an increasingly limited pool. They do this, of course, by offering attractive rates to secure business!

So, if on May 10th the base rate does increase, don't go in to melt-down. If you're concerned by your mortgage options, then visit one of the five Andrews branches across Oxfordshire or visit us online at www.andrewsonline.co.uk and speak to one of our experts who can guide you through the options open to you.

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A superb two double bedroom home, immaculately presented with stylish and neutral decoration. EPC Rating - B

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Perfectly positioned in a cul-de-sac on the popular Peachcroft development in North Abingdon is this charming two bedroom house. EPC- C

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BABLOCKHYTHE, THAMESIDE COURT £150,000
(5 miles Witney, 10 miles Oxford)

A well presented Omar Southdown circa 1990 36' x 20' twin unit set in attractive gardens. Inner hall, 20' lounge, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, LPG gas radiator central heating via combi boiler, UPVC double glazed windows, Decra style roof, re-constituted stone skirt, on-site parking space, attractively landscaped gardens approximately 70' x 40' overall

STEVENTON, NR ABINGDON £182,500
(4 miles Didcot, 4 miles Abingdon)

A superbly presented 1998 Wessex 36' x 20' twin unit bordering farmland on established residential park close to village centre. Porch, hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, (main bedroom with en-suite shower room), bathroom, mains gas radiator central heating, UPVC double glazed windows and doors, textured walls, brick built skirt, Decra style roof, gardens bordering farmland, allocated car space nearby

HORSPATH PARK, HORSPATH £137,500
(5 miles east Oxford city centre)

A recently renovated 1986 Omar Princess 22' x 20' twin unit on popular private park. Lounge/dining room, kitchen, inner hall, bedroom, shower room, LPG gas radiator central heating, UPVC double glazing, Decra style roof, gardens, communal car parking area nearby

BAYSWATER FARM PARK, HEADINGTON £44,950
(3 miles Oxford city centre)

A much improved 1960s Bluebird Reknown 32' x 9'6 single unit set in enclosed gardens on popular private park. Porch, hall, lounge/diner, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, LPG gas radiator central heating, UPVC replacement double glazing, Decra style roof, private gardens behind high fencing, communal car parking nearby

THAMESIDE COURT, BABLOCKHYTHE £139,950
(5 miles Witney, 10 miles Oxford)

A superbly presented and skilfully improved 2010 Omar Oulton Excel 34' x 16' twin unit on favoured private Thameside park. Hall, L-shaped lounge/diner, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, luxury shower room, LPG gas radiator central heating, UPVC double glazing, carpets, curtains and furnishings, on-site parking, brick built skirt and steps, gardens

BICESTER PARK HOME ESTATE £185,000
(2 miles Bicester, 12 miles Oxford)

A well presented 2015 Prestige Sonata II 35' x 22'3 twin unit set in low maintenance gardens on this recently established park home site just south of Bicester town centre. Hall, lounge, dining area, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms (main bedroom with en-suite shower room), bathroom, LPG gas radiator central heating, UPVC double glazed windows and doors, Decra style roof, brick built skirt and steps, low maintenance gardens, on-site car parking space

ST MARY'S COURT, BAMPTON £179,950
(4 miles Witney, 12 miles Oxford)

A superbly presented 2011 Tingdene Muslo Lodge 42' x 20' twin unit pleasantly situated on this established and popular private park. Porch hall, superb L-shaped lounge/diner, study, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms (main bedroom with dressing room adjoining), luxury bathroom/shower room, LPG gas radiator central heating, wood-effect flooring throughout, UPVC double glazed Georgian style windows and doors, textured external walls, Decra style roof, brick built skirt and steps, gravelled driveway and gravelled car parking space, low maintenanc gardens

KINGS COPSE, GARSINGTON £169,950
(4 miles east Oxford city centre)

A superbly presented 2015 Tingdene Hayden Classic 28' x 16' twin unit in attractive gardens. Lounge, kitchen/diner, bedroom, en-suite shower room, metered LPG gas radiator central heating, UPVC double glazed windows, Decra style roof, textured walls, attractive gardens, on- site car parking space

FOXHALL MANOR PARK, DIDCOT £99,950
(12 miles south Oxford)

A much improved early 1980s Donnington 36' x 20' twin unit on established park. Hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, 2 good bedrooms, bathroom, separate WC, metered LPG gas radiator central heating, UPVC double glazed replacement windows, Decra style roof, low maintenance gardens, car parking space to side.

THAMESIDE COURT, BABLOCKHYTHE £130,000
(5 miles Witney, 10 miles Oxford)

A much improved mid 1970's Lisset Lodge 30' x 20' twin unit with open views over farmland to rear on favoured private park. Inner hall, 19'6 lounge/diner, kitchen, 2 good bedrooms, re-fitted shower room, LPG gas radiator central heating with combi boiler, UPVC double glazed windows and doors, textured walls, Decra style roof, gardens with on-site parking

BICESTER PARK HOME ESTATE £150,000
(10 miles Oxford)

A circa 2000 Stately Albion 40' x 20' twin unit on enclosed pitch. Porch, hall, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, utility room, 2 good bedrooms, shower room, LPG gas radiator central heating, UPVC double glazing, on-site car parking, gardens

BLEWBURY, DIDCOT £136,000
(4 miles Didcot, 15 miles oxford)

A 2008 Homeseeker 32' x 20' twin unit set in low maintenance gardens with 2 on-site driveways on private park situated in the heart of this sought after village. Hall, lounge/dining room, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, mains gas radiator central heating, UPVC double glazed windows and doors, coved ceilings, textured external walls, brick built skirt and steps, Decra style roof, enclosed low maintenance gardens with 2 on-site driveways, additional communal car parking nearby

THE WILLOWS, GROVE £99,500

A 1986 Tingdene 36' x 20' twin unit in need of some updating set on corner plot on established private park. Hall, 17' lounge, dining area, kitchen, 2 good bedrooms, bathroom, mains has radiator central heating, UPVC double glazing, Decra style roof, brick built skirt, low maintenance gardens, communal car parking to front

SANDFORD ON THAMES £84,000
(3 miles Oxford centre)

A much improved and well-extended 1970's Donnington 43' x 10' single unit backing onto fields. Hall, lounge, kitchen/diner, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, LPG gas radiator central heating, UPVC double glazed replacement windows, Decra style roof, gardens, on-site car parking space

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Ephesians 6:10

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Volvo XC60 D4 AWD Momentum (Manual)

This car can make you a better driver

By **Tony Yates**

I AM not sure how many of you have ever driven a Volvo – but let me tell you this; once you have, you will never drive anything else that feels even remotely close. So, why does a Volvo make you feel this way? Well, to be honest, I have no idea – all I can tell you is that every time I go out for a drive in a Volvo, I seem to be a better driver, and if I'm being honest, more courteous, more relaxed, and dare I say it – more like a human being and not a robot when out on the open road.

This, of course, gives me the starting block on how the XC60 faired when I took 'her' out for a spin to Norfolk.

I don't know much about Norfolk, apart from it has lovely beaches and some lovely roads. If I was you, I would go for a day out – but remember you will need the XC60 if you really want to experience the real driving pleasure.

Power & efficiency

The XC60 I had on test was fitted with a 190hp four-cylinder 1,969cc diesel engine with 400Nm of torque at 1750rpm. 0-60 is dealt with in around 8.3sec (manual) and will max out at 127mph. I like this engine a lot because it's very refined and does the job of getting you around at a decent pace brilliantly. The big plus point here though is its torque levels which makes overtaking easy and pretty much effortless, even for a vehicle that I would consider to be large in size. For those of you looking for the fuel figures, I managed around 50+ mpg on the combined cycle.

On the road

I expected nothing but the best because my test car was fitted with AWD - which basically means you can take it anywhere you like subject to the ride height of course. Remember this is not a Range Rover – but for me, it ticks all the right boxes and its AWD abilities are very good on pretty much any surface. I was actually amazed at the amount of grip it had on and off-road. Volvo have done a great job in getting this system to work on all surfaces - while still allowing it to feel like a normal road car once you hit the tarmac, which is pretty hard to pull off – as most will suffer from either being a little soft or at the other end of the scale 'rock hard'. But Volvo seems to have found some middle ground here, which is, of course, a real blessing.

Design & technology

Volvo interiors are very similar across all their models - and are all very 'plush'. Also, everything fits and works well with the driver and nothing is fussy, even the touchscreen display is simple to use and not complex like the one BMW use. The seating is also well designed and even after a 4hr drive to the Norfolk coast, I still felt as fresh as a daisy.

Some of the standard equipment in the XC60 includes; City Safety with Steer Assist – which includes pedestrian, cyclist and large animal protection and front collision warning. Oncoming lane mitigation – automatically provides steering assistance if you unwittingly drift out of your lane. Sensus Connect – allows you access to a range of web apps and a lot more, DAB (Digital Audio Broadcasting) Radio, Bluetooth® Handsfree System and a 9" centre console touch screen, two-zone climate control, 8" active TFT crystal driver's information display, heated front seats, 18" alloy wheels, plus a whole host of additional features that will keep you going for weeks to come. But, let's be clear here, a lot of the features in the XC60 point to safety – doing all it can to keep you safe & sound.

To sum up

A great machine that will do it's best to please you every time you turn the key – also, there are no surprises with the XC60 because you have it all wrapped up in one perfect package. So, all that's left to say is a perfect five stars from me.

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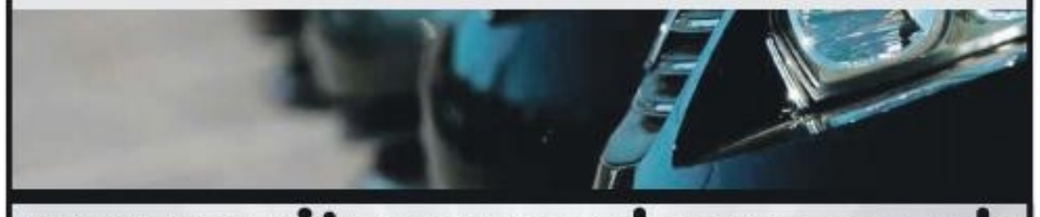

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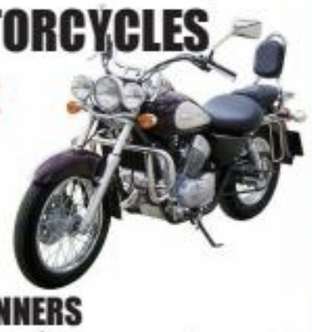

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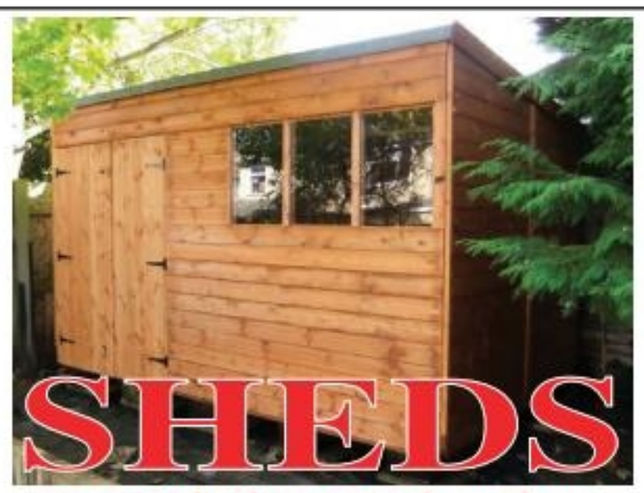

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From pit of despair to praise

Kevin Magnussen finished ahead of team-mate Romain Grosjean **Picture:** *Haas F1*

By George Welch

F1 - Haas

THEY were left devastated in Australia, but Kevin Magnussen was quick to praise Haas's pit crew in Bahrain.

The Dane matched the Banbury team's highest Formula 1 finish with an impressive fifth placed finish to get his season up and running.

But almost as importantly, wheels were put on correctly and there were no other race-ending hiccups during the Haas pit stops.

"I'm proud of the guys and the team, but especially the guys in the pit stop," said the relieved Magnussen.

"They kept their heads and got back to basics. They did what they do best and they delivered.

"I couldn't really fight with Gasly in the Toro Rosso ahead in fourth, but still, we're happy with P5."

Team principal Guenther Steiner was also delighted the engineers recovered. He said: "All in all, it's been a good weekend. The pit stops were good.

"We had five in the race and they were all good. I think the guys have recovered and I'm very proud of them.

"Coming back from two failed pit stops at the last race in Australia to take a fifth-place finish without a problem, it's fantastic."

Magnusson's team-mate Romain Grosjean trudged home in 15th after a messy race and at one point the pair, on differing strategies, were battling for position and nearly crashed.

Magnussen was heard cursing angrily on the team radio when Grosjean, on worn tyres, refused to make way for his colleague, causing a near miss.

All he said in the paddock afterwards – rather reluctantly – was: "We need to talk about that..."

Elsewhere, Nico Hulkenberg scored points in back-to-back races for the Enstone-based Renault team.

The German finished sixth, benefiting from Ferrari driver Kimi Raikkonen's retirement after he ran over his own mechanic in the pits, while teammate Carlos Sainz narrowly missed out on the points in 11th.

Managing director Cyril Abiteboul hailed the 'fine' result and challenged his team to maintain the momentum at Sunday's Chinese GP in Shanghai.

In a bit of a shakeup, Pirelli have abandoned the supersofts and made the medium, ultrasoft and the soft tyres available for Shanghai.

A lot of work to be done

F1 - Williams

ROOKIE Sergey Sirotkin believes Williams "looked like idiots" after both drivers brought up the field in a forgettable Bahrain GP on Sunday.

The Russian, who completed his first race distance at the Sakhir Grand Prix Circuit, delivered his ruthless verdict after he finished 17th and team-mate Lance Stroll brought his car home in 16th.

"A tough feeling after a tough weekend," the 23-year-old said.

"I know we looked like idiots from the outside. This is quite obvious to me."

This past weekend, Williams sat at the back of the grid right from Q1 while Toro Rosso, Force India and Sauber all scored at least one point.

Chief technical officer Paddy Lowe has called on the Grove-based team to 'stick together', although major upgrades for the FW41 are not expected until the Spanish GP in three races time on May 13.

"It was not a great end to a very tough weekend for the team," the former Mercedes man said.

"We didn't have the pace to compete with any other cars except ourselves.

"This is a time to stick together as a team and work intelligently and diligently on the problems we face."

Lance Stroll, who said after Melbourne that Williams is 'surviving not racing', added: "There is a lot of work to be done."

Lance Stroll leads team-mate Sergey Sirotkin. Picture: *Williams Martini Racing*

Smith taking positives from 'good feeling with the bike'

MotoGP

OXFORD rider Bradley Smith was frustrated in a frenetic Argentine MotoGP after crashing seven laps from the finish.

The Red Bull KTM Factory rider set off from the seventh row of the grid and started well on the Gran Premio de la Republica Argentina track on Sunday.

The 27-year-old raced as high as ninth as the initially wet track died under tyre before fading back to 17th after contact with other riders.

The tricky track made overtaking difficult and Smith crashed at turn one just seven laps from the flag as he tried to make up ground.

Smith said: "Unfortunately I had a few situations where riders hit me and I lost a lot of ground.

"I tried to get my head down and start to come forwards, and my lap-times were coming down but I got too greedy in the first corner and went off-line. I lost the front.

"It was a frustrating way to end the race but there are a lot of positives from this weekend. I found a good feeling with the bike from FP1 and the performance was there in the race so I need to keep doing the same things."

MotoGP ventures north to Austin, Texas, for round three on April 22.

Bradley Smith crashed out at the Termas de Rio Gondo **Picture:** *Gold and Goose*

Stars shine to be champions

Ice hockey

LEAGUE champions Oxford City Stars capped off an historic campaign with a convincing 3-1 victory over Sutton Sting on Sunday to be crowned NIHL national champions.

With the NIHL South 2 settled two weeks ago, Stars took their foot off the pedal as Solent Devils registered a 3-0 consolation win on Saturday to wrap up the remaining league fixtures.

Despite the defeat, Stars remained ahead of their title rivals to claim the NIHL South 2 title by one point.

The Stars did not let Saturday's defeat dampen their spirits as they took to the ice on Sunday against North Division 2 champions Sutton Sting.

Both teams registered more than 40 shots on goal, but clinical finishing from Stars proved to be the difference at the Skydome Arena in Coventry.

Michael Whillock opened the scoring on 25.34 minutes, before Joe Edwards doubled the lead in the middle period.

Sutton had a sting in the tail as Stanislav Lascek pulled one back from a powerplay goal on 45.02 before Conor Redmond restored Oxford's two-goal advantage four minutes later.

Stars will look to add a third trophy to their cabinet this season when the NIHL 2 play-off quarter-finals get under way on April 14 and 15 against Bristol Pitbulls at Oxpens Road.

Making every point count

Rugby

WHEATLEY fought back to earn a losing bonus point at Abingdon in the BBO Premiership on Saturday.

Jordan Hook was on hand to unlock the Abingdon defence early on for Wheatley after pulling clear, with Aaron Laman adding the conversion for 7-0.

Abingdon came back into the game, but a penalty on the stroke of half time saw Laman add the three points for a 10-8 lead.

The second half was a different story as a resilient Abingdon dictated play to end the scoring at 21-15 to the home team.

Elsewhere, Didcot registered a resounding 81-12 home victory against Hungerford.

Gosford All Blacks are all but confirmed their relegation from the Southern Counties North following their 65-12 defeat at High Wycombe.

In the South West 1 East, Banbury's play-off spot chase continues after a 49-21 away win at Stratford-upon-Avon, while Oxford Harlequins beat Marlow 26-19 at home.

Wimbourne smashed Witney 32-5, Grove's stay in the sixth tier is over after a 46-7 defeat relegated them, and bottom team Bicester lost 33-25 at Swindon.

There was joy for Chinnor in the National League 2 after a 56-43 win at Taunton Titans tied up a play-off spot for the Thame-based team.

Meanwhile, Henley Hawks secured a losing bonus point with a 29-22 defeat at Clifton.

Sport

Mission completed with victory

Oxford City

OXFORD City recorded a vital win in their quest to secure survival in the National League South as they ran out 2-1 winners at home to Eastbourne Borough on Saturday.

Two quick-fire goals at the start of the second half – an own-goal and a Matt Paterson penalty – set City on their way.

Yemi Odubade's 86th minute strike for Eastbourne set up a nervy ending but the Hoops managed to hold on.

Sam Nombe and Rob Sinclair went close for the Hoops early on but the home side nearly fell behind when the unmarked Matt Pickering fired narrowly wide for the Sports.

The vital first goal came on 54 minutes when a Nombe cross deflected off Pickering for the Oxford opener.

City wasted no time in trying to add to their lead and were given a superb opportunity to do so as they were awarded a penalty just four minutes later. Nombe was fouled and Paterson did the honours from 12 yards.

Odubade smashed home late on for the visitors but they could not find an equaliser.

The win leaves Oxford 17th, three places but a distant 12 points clear of Poole Town in 20th, the last relegation spot.

Manager Mark Jones said: "We needed to get over the line and get that win I was talking about over the last couple of weeks.

"We just about deserved it, it wasn't one of our best performances of the season, but we still created plenty of chances. There were many times this season where we've come off and thought we deserved something better.

"The main objective on Saturday was to win the game, which we did, and it would take something extraordinary now for us not to keep our place in the National League South."

City were due to play Wealdstone last night (Wednesday) after we went to press. Jones suggested there were some tired legs in the camp and that he could rotate his squad to freshen things up.

Frankie Musonda was ruled out through injury after picking up a knock against Eastbourne and Eddie Jones was suspended.

The Hoops travel to mid-table Weston-Super-Mare on Saturday.

Matt Paterson, pictured earlier in the season, scored what proved to be the winner from the spot
Picture: *Michael Allen*

Vanarama National League South
Saturday 7 April
Oxford City 2-1 Eastbourne Borough
Wednesday 11 April
Wealdstone v **Oxford City**

Evo-Stik South Premier
Saturday 7 April
Banbury United 1-1 Biggleswade Town
Tuesday 10 April
Royston Town 1-1 **Banbury United**

Evo-Stik South East
Saturday 7 April
Uxbridge 1-5 **Thame United**
Tuesday 10 April
Hartley Wintney 2-0 **Thame United**

Evo-Stik South West
Saturday 7 April
Barnstaple Town 0-4 **Didcot Town**
Bishops Cleeve 1-1 **North Leigh**
Paulton Rovers 0-1 **Kidlington**
Tuesday 10 April
Bideford P-P **North Leigh**
Kidlington 0-3 Evesham United
Thursday 12 April
North Leigh v **Kidlington**

Uhlsport Hellenic League Premier Division
Saturday 7 April
Brimscombe & Thrupp 4-1 **Abingdon United**
Royal Wootton Bassett 0-3 **Wantage Town**
Monday 9 April
Highmoor Ibis 4-5 **Oxford City Nomads**

High-flying Freds keep the pressure on at the top

Hellenic round-up

WANTAGE Town kept up pace with Hellenic Premier Division leaders Thatcham Town after a 3-0 win at Royal Wootton Bassett on Saturday.

Jack Dunmall opened the scoring on 38 minutes before Harvey Scholes added a second midway through the second half. Steve Robertson struck with 10 minutes remaining to secure all three points for the Freds and move them to within a point of Highworth in second place.

Just three points separate the four clubs at the top of the league table, with Wantage on 81 points in third place behind leaders Thatcham.

Elsewhere, Oxford City Nomads were in midweek action winning a nine-goal thriller away at Highmoor Ibis. Josh Pin put the visitors in front on 11 minutes but Nomads fell 2-1 behind within half an hour.

Dan Collins and Kyle Bestley both registered as the away side went into the break 3-2 ahead.

Highmoor drew level a minute after the restart to make it 3-3 until Pin grabbed his second of the game on 70 minutes.

Connor Mattimore's strike on 82 minutes meant Highmoor's fourth reply would not be enough as Nomads held on for a 5-4 win,.

Abingdon United did not have such luck on the road and were on the wrong side of a 4-1 thrashing against Brimscombe & Thrupp on Saturday.

Promotion push back on track after 4-0 win on trip to Devon

Morgan Williams puts Didcot 3-0 ahead. **Picture**: *Roger Neal*

Evo-Stik round-up

DIDCOT Town's play off bid was given a huge boost as Saturday's 4-0 win at Barnstaple Town temporarily pushed them back into the top six.

The Railwaymen ran riot, despite making their second longest trip of the season with just 13 fit players.

Despite the reshuffle, it took Didcot just 90 seconds to get going as George Jeacock headed home from a corner.

Captain Sam Barder made it two shortly afterwards and the game was over after just 25 minutes as Morgan Williams headed in the third.

Louis Joyce fired home from close range for the away side's fourth in the second half.

Diddy's spell in the Evo-Stik South West play-offs was fleeting however as Evesham United leapfrogged them following their 3-0 win at Kidlington on Tuesday.

The Greens fared better on Saturday when Conor McDonagh grabbed the only goal of the game in a 1-0 win at Paulton Rovers.

Elsewhere, struggling North Leigh, who have dismissed rumours suggesting they will resign from the league, picked up a point in a 1-1 draw at Bishops Cleave on Saturday.

Their trip to Bideford on Tuesday was called off due to a waterlogged pitch but they are due to host Kidlington in an all-Oxfordshire clash this evening (Thursday).

In the East division, Thame United won 5-1 at Uxbridge on Saturday but lost 2-0 at Hartley Wintney on Tuesday.

Two draws leave Puritans mid-table to extend unbeaten run to eight

Banbury United

A SECOND half Anthony Wright goal earned Banbury United a hard earned point in a 1-1 draw at Royston Town.

The midfielder netted on the hour to cancel out Martel Powell's first half strike for the home side.

Royston began the game well, Lee Chappell striking the bar in the fourth minute. Five minutes later and they had the lead when a Powell strike hit the far post and nestled in the back of the net.

John Frendo then struck the bar for the Crows on 15 minutes.

Wright got United's equaliser in the second half when he rounded goalkeeper Josh Tibbetts to slot the ball into a gaping net.

Royston dominated the closing stages but the Puritans held on for the point.

Tuesday's point followed another 1-1 draw on Saturday, this time at home to Biggleswade Town.

The north Oxfordshire side took the lead just after the hour mark through a Luke Carnell header. Biggleswade snatched an equaliser six minutes from time when Robbie Parker bundled the ball home from close range to earn the visitors a point.

The two draws extended Banbury's unbeaten run to eight games.

They are 9th in the Southern Premier division and host Stratford Town (15th) on Saturday before playing away at Weymouth (3rd) on Tuesday.

Athletes giving it their all Down Under

Commonwealth

DIDCOT weightlifter Ben Watson achieved an impressive sixth place finish in his second Commonwealth Games on Monday.

The 28-year-old competed in the 105kg weightlifting category lifting 155kg on his first snatch before lifting 160kg.

The St Birinus Club weightlifter, who took bronze in the same class at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, then clean and jerked 192kg to finish the event in sixth.

Elsewhere at the international sports tournament in Australia, Oakley athlete Matt French missed out on a medal in his final double trap competition on Wednesday.

The 36-year-old shot 24, 28, 21, 29, 28 in the five rounds of 30 to post 130 and miss out on qualifying by two clay targets on the Gold Coast.

French won silver in Glasgow but will switch to skeet as double trap has been removed from the Olympic games.

On Sunday, Oxford City race walker Gemma Bridge finished the women's 20k race walk in an astonishing 1hr 39mins 31secs to finish fifth overall.

In hockey, Oxford Brookes University lecturer Danny Newcombe coached a Wales side as they threw away a two-goal lead to lose 3-2 to England on Tuesday.

Also on day six, Upper Heyford's Stefanie Collins featured in the Team England basketball team which progressed to the semi-finals with victory over Jamaica.

Triple jumper Nathan Douglas competes in the qualifying round today (Thursday).

Ben Watson competed in the 105kg category

‘Everyone’s got to climb over the wall for this football club’

By George Welch

Oxford United 0
Oldham Athletic 0

Attendance: 7,096 (492 away)

KARL Robinson has stressed he expects more from Isaac Buckley-Ricketts after hauling the Manchester City loanee off after just quarter of an hour during Saturday’s goalless draw with Oldham.

The 20-year-old was ushered onto the pitch as a 29th minute substitute, replacing Josh Ruffels who limped out of the game.

However, unimpressed, gaffer Robinson withdrew the England Under-19 European champion at half time.

The new manager confirmed afterwards that replacing Buckley-Ricketts, who has made eight starts for Oxford since signing on loan in January, was performance related and not due to an injury.

He said: “I’m here for Oxford United, not to develop players for Manchester City or anybody else.

“Loan players have to make a difference when they come on.

“Development with loans is your [the parent club’s] players have to perform.

“I don’t mind what they say – I don’t really care – because there’s over 7,000 people here that would go to the wall with Oxford United so every player’s got to go with them to that wall. And climb it, by the way, not just get there – get over it.”

He added: “I had Ezri Konsa and Ademola Lookman who were in that [England] team and I know how good they are and how hard they work.”

The 0-0 draw with Oldham did little to calm the relegation nerves around the Kassam but Robinson, who has called on his players to rediscover their ruthless edge in the box, was ‘proud’ of his players’ application.

He said: “I don’t think the players, staff and fans can shout anymore, my shirt is soaked through with sweat and my jumper is stretched from all the pulling actions I was trying to give the referee.

“I can’t ask anymore of the whole football club. I’m proud of them.”

He added: “I can’t remember the last time we kept a clean sheet so it’s important we work on the fundamentals of winning games.

“You don’t win games if you concede a lot of goals and that’s certainly been the case since I’ve been here.

“So I’m pleased with the players and hopefully we can build on it.”

Jon Obika is hauled back by George Edmundson

Rob Dickie sees his shot and follow up saved by Johny Placide

Karl Robinson gives the thumbs up and below, Todd Kane chases after the ball. **Pictures**: *Steve Daniels*

James Henry fires wide in the goalless draw against Oldham on Saturday **Picture:** *Steve Daniels*

Henry caps good month with award

ATTACKING midfielder James Henry has been voted Oxford United’s player of the month for March.

It was a good month for the 28-year-old, who scored twice, against the play-off chasing duo of Peterborough United and Scunthorpe United.

Henry scooped the award after fans cast their vote on the club’s website.

The former Millwall man was influential for the U’s throughout the month and his calmness from the spot against the Iron earned Oxford a valuable point.

That was after the Reading-born midfielder netted the second in a 2-1 win against the Posh.

The player of the month vote for April will be held towards the end of the month.

Henry, in his debut season for United after signing on a free from Wolverhampton Wanderers in the summer, has scored eight goals in 45 appearances so far for the U’s.

We’ll be a completely different side

FANS will soon see a ‘completely different side’ under Karl Robinson, according to goalkeeper Simon Eastwood.

The shot-stopper picked up just his second clean sheet in 15 games after the goalless draw against Oldham on Saturday – but he has been impressed with the new man in charge.

Eastwood, who was openly unhappy under the previous regime, has taken to the former Charlton Athletic boss, even though the club is still searching for the first win of his reign.

The 28-year-old keeper said: “He’s been brilliant. He’s a nice guy but he has good man management.

“He’s straight as they come. He tells you where you’re at and the players have taken that on board and hopefully we can get out of the trouble we’re in.

“We will see a completely new side and build for next season.”

The former Blackburn Rovers man was content after the twitchy draw with Oldham. It was a missed opportunity to edge away from the League One drop zone but avoiding defeat was the most important thing.

He said: “I didn’t have too much to do personally and I don’t think their keeper had much to do either.

“The game could have gone either way. It was a fair result.”

Simon Eastwood punches clear against Peterborough United last month **Picture:** *Steve Daniels*

SkyBet League 1		GP	GD	PTS
1	Wigan Athletic	40	54	86
2	Blackburn Rovers	41	39	86
3	Shrewsbury Town	40	22	81
4	Rotherham United	41	17	69
5	Plymouth Argyle	40	5	63
6	Charlton Athletic	41	5	62
7	Portsmouth	41	3	62
8	Peterborough United	41	13	61
9	Scunthorpe United	41	9	61
10	Bristol Rovers	41	-4	55
11	Fleetwood Town	42	-4	54
12	Blackpool	42	2	53
13	Southend United	41	-11	53
14	Bradford City	39	-12	53
15	Gillingham	41	-4	51
16	Doncaster Rovers	39	2	50
17	Oxford United	41	-7	47
18	Walsall	40	-10	47
19	AFC Wimbledon	41	-12	46
20	Oldham Athletic	39	-14	44
21	Rochdale	40	-9	42
22	MK Dons	41	-18	42
23	Northampton Town	42	-36	40
24	Bury	41	-30	30

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Shock as 'outstanding' players miss out again

By George Welch

Oxford United 0
Fleetwood Town 1

Conor McAleny 90+3

Attendance: 6,337 (57 away)

A SUPERB stoppage time strike from old boy Conor McAleny stunned Oxford United as Fleetwood Town earned a smash-and-grab victory on Tuesday.

The former Everton youngster, who enjoyed a prolific loan spell at the Kassam last season, came off the bench in the second half to characteristically cut in from the left and hammer a fierce 25-yard drive beyond keeper Simon Eastwood.

It was a body blow for the U's who, desperate for a win, dominated the game and had enough chances to win the game comfortably.

Alex Mowatt returned from his three match ban to zing an effort narrowly wide before Wes Thomas, who squandered multiple chances, headed over before half time.

There were more golden opportunities to score – and secure Karl Robinson's first Oxford win – in the second half.

Joe Rothwell misjudged his angles, Ryan Ledson could not respond quick enough to a back post cross and Thomas volleyed wide late on after skewing wide from a jinking run.

At the other end, Eastwood came to Oxford's rescue with two superb saves in quick succession.

He saved with his feet from Bobby Grant following a poor back pass by John Mousinho before acrobatically turning aside a Kyle Dempsey drive.

But wasteful United were made to pay when McAleny, the scorer of 10 goals under Michael Appleton's stewardship last season, cracked home the ferocious winner to stun the home crowd. The 23-year-old did not celebrate.

Robinson admitted he was 'shocked and speechless' after his side failed to win.

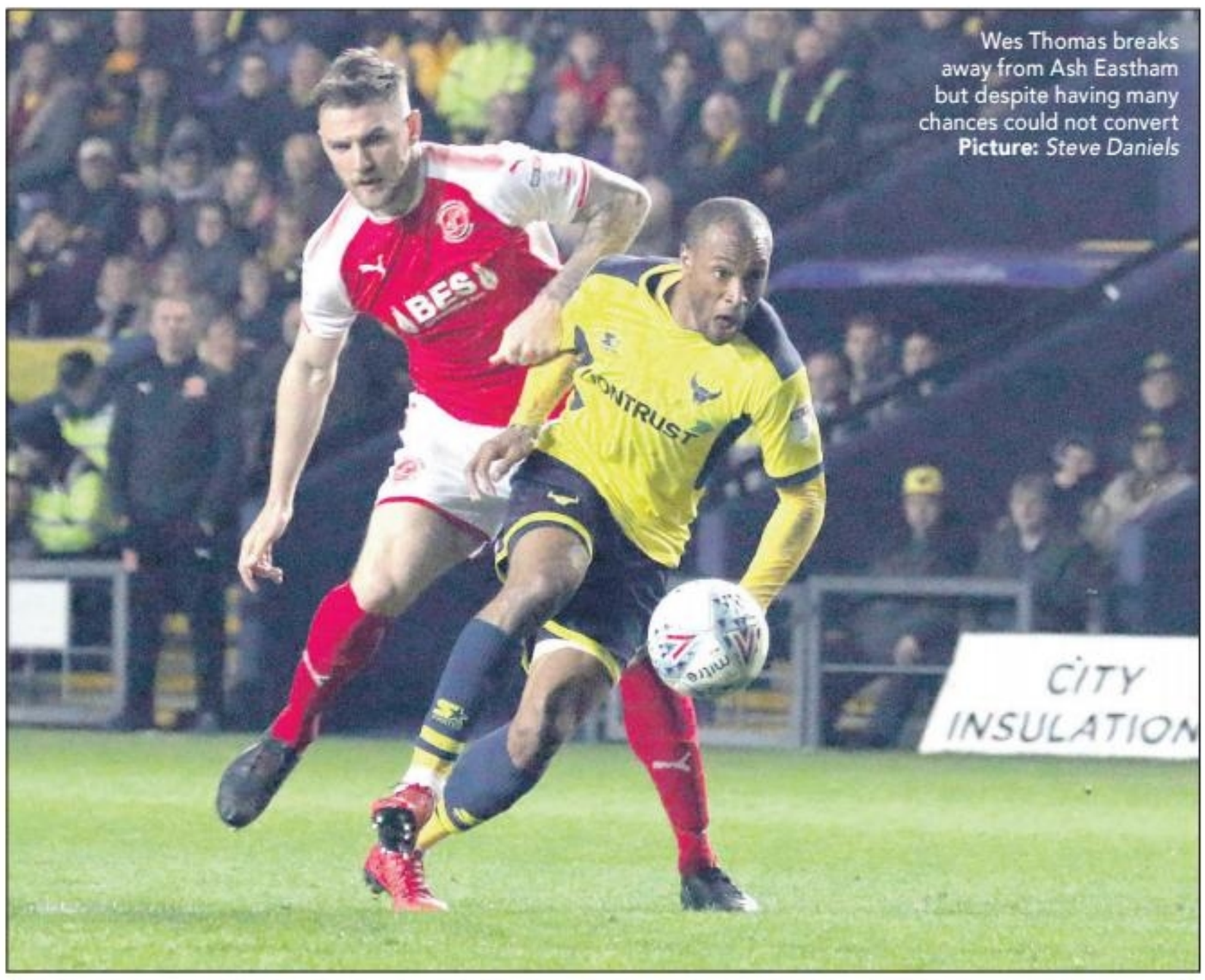
He said: "You have to score. I can do all the coaching in the world, I can get them motivated and I can get them to play well. I've never seen anything like it.

"In all the games I've managed I don't think I've ever been so shocked after a game.

"My players were outstanding – but they have to score."

The defeat means the U's remain just five points above the relegation zone and have now not managed to beat Fleetwood in eight attempts.

Oxford host Southend United (13th) on Saturday in another crucial home game before a daunting trip to league leaders Wigan Athletic on Tuesday.



Wes Thomas breaks away from Ash Eastham but despite having many chances could not convert **Picture:** *Steve Daniels*

One victory from safety but chances need to be converted

THE returning Alex Mowatt believes Oxford United were so dominant against Fleetwood Town, only a moment of magic would prevent the hosts getting anything from the game.

But that is exactly what Conor McAleny delivered deep into injury time to silence a stunned Kassam Stadium.

The wonder strike made the trip back to Lancashire worth it for the 57 jubilant Cod Army fans, but even they would admit they were lucky to escape with all three points.

Mowatt, who had a point to prove after his farcical sending off against Portsmouth over the Easter weekend, went close early on in another frustrating game for United.

"We battered them and we should have won," the Barnsley loanee said.

"It was an unbelievable finish [from McAleny] but it was the only way they could have got anything from the game. We defended well and we had enough chances to win.

"On another day we win that three or four nil.

"We created the chances which is a good thing. We just need to put them away."

Just one more win, which would be Karl Robinson's first in charge of the U's, should be enough for Oxford to secure their League One status.

The 23-year-old added: "It's frustrating. We should have got the win today but we'll have to pick our heads up and get the three points on Saturday at home to Southend."

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